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ABSTRACT

On the premise that postsecondary institutions can respond adequately to the new Indochinese student population only if an accurate description of the students is provided, an ethnographic study of the refugee community's process of adaptation was undertaken. The social situations and experiences of the refugees are described, including their relationships to those individuals and institutions identified as "patrons" and/or "brokers." Patterns of adaptation are characterized as ranging from total financial self-sufficiency to heavy reliance on public and private assistance. Regarding Indochinese students, the University of Minnesota presents information about educational background, career preferences, and motivations for attending the university. The institution's inclusion of Indochinese students in the minority students' support program is analyzed in terms of how this may be providing a new self-identity of being an Asian ethnic and a minority. This raises the possibility that Indochinese will find resources and opportunities made available to them through emphasizing the negative aspects of minority status. (Author/LBH)

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A New Minority:

Indochinese Refugees in Higher Education

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A New Minority: Indochinese Refugees in Higher Education

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Student Life Studies and Planning

University of Minnesota

Abstract

Among the 150,000 Indochinese refugees in the United States, a sizable number have chosen to attend universities and colleges. On the premise that post-secondary institutions can respond adequately to this new group only if an accurate description of the students is provided, an ethnographic study of the refugee community's process of adaptation to their new environment was undertaken. The social situations and experiences of the refugees are described, including their relationships to those individuals and institutions we identify as "patrons" and/or "brokers." Patterns of adaptation are characterized as ranging from total financial self-sufficiency to heavy reliance on public and private assistance.

With regard to Indochinese students at the University of Minnesota, the study presents information about educational backgrounds, career preferences, and motivations for attending university. Indochinese students have received help from the University in the form of academic counseling and financial assistance. The institution's inclusion of Indochinese students in the minority students support program is analyzed in terms of how this may be providing a new self-identity of being an Asian ethnic and a minority. This raises the possibility that Indochinese will find resources and opportunities made available to them through emphasizing the negative aspects of minority status.

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A NEW MINORITY: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Kenneth A. Skinner and Glenn L. Hendricks

Introduction

Among the 150,000 Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian refugees in the United States, a sizable number consider higher education as part of their strategies for "making it" in a new society. At the University of Minnesota, 203 Indochinese refugee students, almost exclusively Vietnamese, were enrolled during Fall 1977.

A central question facing the University is: How should the institution respond to these students? More specifically, do these students, with their distinct socio-legal position and educational concerns, require or merit special educational or service programs? This study explores this question.

One of the shortcomings of institutions in dealing with culturally-different clients has often been that the definition of needs and the institution's responses have been formulated in the institution's terms and according to its values. On occasion, the result has been that programs do not touch actual needs and are under-utilized by the client group. In the case of the Indochinese refugee students, the possibility of inaccurate assessment of educational needs and inappropriate responses is especially great since they are non-indigenous people from cultures about which few Americans have much knowledge. In many respects, the war in Indochina stands as a monument to the West's failure to understand the cultures of that part of the world.

This study takes the view that the Indochinese students must be understood in the context of the larger process of adaptation to U.S. society in which the refugee community is engaged. A description of the situation and patterns of adaptation of the refugees during the two years since their arrival contributes to understanding that segment which has chosen to come to the University. Knowing who the students are is essential to any consideration of how the institution should respond to their presence.

Our description of these students includes their social and economic backgrounds, previous education, motivations for attending the University, career choices, and assumptions about university education. The experience of these individuals during their two years in the United States is revealing about how they can be expected to perform at the University. A description of the students of necessity requires consideration of the impact of descriptors, or more accurately, categories, which are applied to these individuals, including "Indochinese refugee" and "minority student."

Data for the study were collected from interviews with Vietnamese and Americans involved in various aspects of the resettlement process and with refugees. University records and documents made available by University offices have also been used. The report is divided into two parts. First is a description of the experience of the refugees as a whole in Minnesota. In the second part, the focus shifts to higher education and those refugees who have chosen to attend the University of Minnesota.

Part I: The Refugee Community's Experiences of Adaptation

Legal Status and Social Backgrounds

The change of governments in the Indochinese nations during Spring 1975 prompted thousands of people to leave their homelands. The exodus was marked by scenes of people scrambling aboard U.S. military helicopters or clamoring for berths on military and fishing vessels headed out to sea. As of June 1977, nearly 150,000 individuals have been resettled in the United States. What is sometimes forgotten in the immediacy of the Indochinese influx is that since 1946 an estimated 1.6 million of the nine million people who have immigrated to the U.S. have been refugees. This number includes about 700,000 displaced by World War II, 675,000 Cubans, and 38,000 Hungarians (Klein 1975). The vast majority of refugees from Indochina are Vietnamese, and this report deals primarily with people of that country. (We realize that the term "Indochinese" is a remnant of the colonial period and is not a respected category among people of the three Southeast Asian nations from which refugees have come. However, in absence of a better single category for people from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, we are compelled to use "Indochinese" because of its descriptive utility and currency among possible readers.)

Unlike the Cuban refugees who are concentrated in southern Florida, the Indochinese have been dispersed throughout the country. In number of refugees, Minnesota ranks ninth in comparison to other states. In the fall of 1977, over 3200 refugees were residing in the state. Of these, more than half were living in Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

In October 1977, the refugees became eligible for permanent resident status. Since their arrival, however, the refugees have held the legal status of "parolee," a special category instituted in 1952 which circumvents quota limitations on immigration and allows entrance under emergency circumstances. The original intent of the "parolee" provisions of the Immigration and Naturalization Act was to give authority to the Attorney General to admit people on an individual case-by-case basis, such as a high-level communist defector or someone found floating at sea, without concern for quota restrictions. The meaning of "parolee" was altered dramatically in 1956 when President Eisenhower used it to admit thousands of Hungarian refugees. Cuban refugees were also admitted as "parolees."[1] Indochinese students and others on non-immigrant visas who were in the U.S. before the war's end, estimated at 15,000, were also given this status. As "parolees," the refugees did not have rights of their own, but were legally dependent on legislative dictates. Persons present in this country as "parolees" have no guarantee that they will become permanent residents, a status which confers most of the rights of citizenship. The change to permanent resident status required Congressional action, and what this means to the refugees is discussed later.

While the refugees have a variety of specific social backgrounds, two distinct categories can be identified which are of interest to us.

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[1] Some Congressmen are unhappy about the use of the provisions to admit large classes of people and hope to adopt legislation directing that future refugees be admitted under specific acts of Congress.

The two categories are neither all-inclusive nor mutually exclusive. The first category consists of families from urban areas in which the head of the household was a "professional" of some kind. Most of the refugees fall in this category, and we shall speak of them as having "urban professional" backgrounds. They can be considered middle and upper class. An HEW official has provided the statistic that eighty-five percent of the refugees come from urban areas, primarily Saigon. Occupations represented in the "urban professional" category include civil servants, teachers, military and police officers, U.S. embassy staff, employees of U.S. military installations and American companies, businessmen who had dealings with American firms, and physicians (_cf_. Pearlstine 1975, Le 1975). A survey based on records of 20,956 heads of households compiled while the refugees were at relocation camps in 1975 reveals that fifty-one percent were in professional, managerial, clerical, sales, and service occupations; twelve percent in agriculture and industrial labor positions; and sixteen percent in transportation and miscellaneous occupations. Twenty-one percent did not report their occupation (Department of State 1975:11). An HEW survey in September 1976 found that two-thirds of the heads of households had been in white-collar jobs in Vietnam (Kneeland 1977a). Cuban refugees also came largely from similar urban middle and upper strata, with one estimate that sixty-eight percent of those who were employed in Cuba had held white-collar positions (Fagan _et al_. 1968:19).

Vietnamese informants have stated that the majority of those in this "urban professional" category has their roots in North Vietnam. Following the French defeat in 1954, these individuals' families settled in urban centers of the South, finding positions in the bureaucratic, military, and business infrastructures of the new state. According to informants, having migrated in the wake of one change of government or being children of parents who had done so made this group more conscious of flight as a possible course of action. Close identification with Americans and/or the government of South Vietnam also prompted the belief among a sizable number that leaving was preferable to remaining in their homeland. Some families realized that their departure was permanent, while others thought they could wait offshore for a couple weeks while the American and South Vietnamese military routed the North Vietnamese troops from Saigon.

The second category is not nearly as large as the first, but individuals within it occupy a distinctive position because of the circumstances surrounding their departure from Vietnam and subsequent life in the United States. These are the young men and women who are not accompanied by any of their immediate family. Many of the men were low-ranking military personnel from families of the lower strata of Vietnamese society, and when the defenses around Saigon were falling they scrambled aboard boats and helicopters for safety. Few thought at the time that this was an act of self-exile. Similarly, individuals not in the military, such as university students of middle class backgrounds, became separated from their families and were caught up in the general panic to escape incoming rockets and advancing forces. A few decided weeks in advance to take advantage of an opportunity to leave Vietnam should there be one, hoping they could make a better life elsewhere. Cases have been reported of this being done at parents' urging (cf. Rhodes 1976, Malloy 1975a).

The fact that the unattached individuals can be set apart for analytical purposes is reinforced by their experience of often being excluded from social interaction with refugee families. Unattached young men have expressed the feeling of being looked down upon by middle and upper class families. These families may have the unwarranted belief that all of the unattached men are from lower class backgrounds. This exclusion also stems from the fact that families generally have reservations about their daughters marrying men who do not have their families in the U.S. Such marriages are seen as not providing security for a daughter and precluding benefits to her family from a relationship with another family. There is also fear that some of these men have wives and children in Vietnam. Therefore, to reduce the possibility of such marriages, families attempt to maintain separation from these men. Since there are few unattached young women, this poses a problem for the unattached men hoping to marry, and there are reports of friction between them and the parents of Vietnamese women in whom they have shown interest. A few unattached young men in Minnesota have married American women, while no such cases have been reported for young men whose parents are here.

As is discussed later, recognition of the distinct social circumstances of these two categories helps us to understand that segment which has chosen to attend the University. Students come from both categories. While sharing some characteristics, they also reflect differences in motivations, expectations, and preparation for post-secondary education.

Brokers and Patrons for the Refugees

Most groups trying to adapt to alien societies in which they find themselves make use of individuals or institutions which can be considered "brokers" or "patrons." Seeking to "make it" in their new environment, the refugees require access to certain financial, occupational, and educational resources of the larger society. "Brokers" assist in obtaining the resources to meet perceived needs, but they do not control the means by which such needs can be met. The "broker" may possess information about the larger society which can be of assistance, may be the keeper of certain channels through which actions must be directed in order to meet needs, or may have access to means which can be employed by individuals. A "patron," on the other hand, controls certain resources and can dispense them to individuals at his discretion and according to his designs (cf. Wolf 1956, Paine 1971).

The refugees have been assisted by both "brokers" and "patrons," and in some instances the same individual or institution has functioned in both roles. Some of the dynamics of the relationships between the refugees and those who have assisted them can best be understood in terms of these two models.

By far, the major "broker/patron" for the refugees has been the federal government. As the war was ending, the Departments of Defense, State, and HEW and other agencies mobilized to assist those who had left their homelands in resettling in the U.S. The Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 appropriated $405 million for resettlement, $203 million of which has been available to

HEW for 100 percent reimbursement to states for cash assistance, medical assistance, and social services to refugees who meet eligibility requirements.[2] A Task Force was set up in HEW to coordinate programs and allocate funds among the states and voluntary agencies.

Arguments for and against the coming of the refugees were effectively settled by the swiftness of the collapse of Saigon and Phnom Penh, with the flight of thousands of people requiring immediate action by the government. At the time, fears were expressed in some quarters that refugees would compete with Americans for jobs in areas of high unemployment. Partly to offset such opposition, resettlement planners purposefully sought to avoid concentrations of refugees in any section of the United States.

A more sophisticated argument was that perhaps it would be better for the Vietnamese themselves to have remained in their own culture among their families and to have tried to reach an accommodation with the new government.[3] Some of those who left Vietnam have indicated willingness to attempt such accommodation, as over 1500 demanded repatriation after arriving in Guam and 440 others have officially applied for repatriation with the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees should normalization of relations occur. The belief was strong among others that such accommodation would not be possible, especially among those closely associated with the South Vietnamese and American war efforts. Having wound up by choice or circumstance on the losing side of a long and bitter war, many felt that their homeland was lost to them.

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[2] Douglas E. Kneeland reports in The New York Times (February 21, 1977b:24) that a total of about $500 million in federal funds has been provided through various programs and agencies for all aspects of the resettlement.

[3] Psychologist Edward Zigler reports that similar arguments were presented in opposition to bringing over 2000 Vietnamese children to the U.S. for adoption by Americans in Operation Babylift. Vietnamese and American critics pointed out that it was false to assume that these children would have a better life in an alien culture than they would have in Vietnam, even under a new government.

> Even with the ravages of war, the extended family, which readily takes in orphaned children, is currently more viable in Vietnam than in the United States. In fact, adoption by strangers is contrary to the cultural traditions of the Vietnamese. To see these children removed from Vietnam, renamed with Americanized first names, and forever denied access to their native heritage and culture was insulting to many Vietnamese, whatever their political affiliations might be (1976:334).

The federal government's role as "patron" for the refugees has served to quiet the debate over the wisdom of bringing the refugees to this country. The implicit assumption behind the refugee program is that it is a humanitarian response to an undisputed tragedy, but in a National Observer editorial Michael T. Malloy presents a more political rationale for accepting the refugees:

> [T]here were an awful lot of Vietnamese, millions of them, who in one way or another served us in Vietnam. Served us! There have always been good reasons for getting out of Vietnam, but certainly not the perverse justification of recent months that we had done enough for them.
>
> The Vietnamese never matched the American public and Congress in enthusiasm (now conveniently forgotten) for the war we made them fight... Even the generals and cabinet ministers knew they were pawns of the Americans, playing roles we created with our interventions of 1954 and 1965. Willing pawns, some of them, but still pawns. Our leaders used to say as much; we wanted Asians to fight Asians to keep the Chinese or somebody from landing on the beaches of Hawaii. Remember that stuff?
>
> They served us much better than we had a right to expect, a quarter million dead against only 46,000 Americans sacrificed to our fantasies about "Asian communism with its headquarters in Peking" (Remember that too?) So one would think, when we tired of our fantasies, that we would at least rescue the survivors of our policy from the disaster it has brought them (1975b:12).

Refugees were placed with individuals or organizations willing to assume responsibility for their adjustment. As the second "patrons," sponsors were expected to provide food, clothing, shelter, pocket money, ordinary medical expenses, and assistance in finding employment. Most of the sponsors were church groups or service organizations, coordinated by voluntary agencies with experience in resettlement activities, such as the Lutheran Social Services and Catholic Charities. A small number of individuals or single families sponsored refugees. The voluntary agencies assisted sponsors financially with federal funds made available through contracts on the basis of $500 per refugee resettled. Applications from potential sponsors were screened while the refugees were in the relocation camps, and then families and individuals were matched with sponsors. Liston Pope, Jr., a caseworker for the Red Cross at one of the relocation camps, describes the process of connecting refugees with sponsors:

> The magic word, the same in English and Vietnamese, was sponsor. Find a sponsor and be saved; get free access to the Great PX. In-laws, military acquaintances, past employers in American firms in Saigon: these must be reached through the military locators, or through inspired detective work by a caseworker willing to defy Red Cross policy on limiting phone calls to emergencies (1976:26).

Life in the relocation camps was not pleasant, and people were anxious to get out. Rumors spread through the camps about what size families were being requested by sponsors. In some instances, people manipulated their family situations in order to be placed with a sponsor. For example, in the Twin Cities there is a "family" composed of an unmarried man and woman with their respective children, as well as an "uncle" and nephew" who share the same surname but are not actually kin.

To assist and coordinate activities of the voluntary and public agencies, some states established special offices responsible for refugee resettlement. In Minnesota, the five-person Governor's Resettlement Office operated until October 1977, at which time the state's involvement in resettlement shifted to the Department of Public Welfare. The Indochinese staff working in the Governor's Resettlement Office and voluntary agencies were especially instrumental in directing individuals to appropriate agencies and instructing them on necessary procedures.

Unlike other ethnic groups who have migrated and continue to migrate to the U.S., such as Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Mexicans, the Indochinese had no large support group already residing in the U.S. who could assist the newcomers by passing on learned survival skills and who could provide occupational and social networks into which the refugees immediately could fit. Estimates are that only about 15,000 Indochinese were present on non-immigrant visas at the war's end. At the same time, the number of individuals who had been born in Indochina and had become permanent residents or U.S. citizens was extremely small. The few enclaves of Vietnamese which existed were in large cities, primarily in California, and so the dispersal of the refugees throughout the United States reduced the likelihood of finding local support from fellow nationals. In Minnesota, two organized groups of Vietnamese nationals already in the U.S. tried to assist their arriving countrymen. One was the Vietnamese-American Association, established in 1959 and composed largely of Vietnamese women who had married American men. Despite its efforts to provide "brokerage" for refugees, the organization was not accepted by the refugees as representing their interests. Reportedly, the refugees could not identify with a group whose members included Americans and women who had married Americans. Besides feeling that these resident Vietnamese could not appreciate their situation, some refugees resented the comfortable life of "bar girls," whom they looked down on, while they were having difficulty regaining the outward signs of their status in Vietnam. Equally important, however, is the fact that the Vietnamese-American Association, in contrast to sponsors and government agencies, had no resources which could be used to place it in the position of "patron" to the refugees.

The second group was composed of students at the University, but it also failed to gain acceptance. The major reason was that the refugees were suspicious of the motives of the organization's leaders, accusing them of using the refugees' situation as a basis for soliciting money outside the community with the intention of pocketing much of it.

Neither of these organizations included refugees in their leadership, exacerbating the refugees' feelings that fellow nationals who were not refugees could not understand their situation. About a year after their arrival, refugee-organized associations began appearing in the Twin Cities; three for the Vietnamese, and one each for the Cambodians and Laotians. Recently, a new association was established by the Hmong of Laos. Because financial resources are limited and few individuals can take much time away from efforts to provide for their livelihood to devote to activities, the associations have been primarily involved in organizing a few cultural events, such as New Years celebrations, and setting up Vietnamese language classes for children. Within the Vietnamese community, suspicious about the ambitions of association leaders as well as perceived social and ideological exclusiveness have also restricted active participation by many people. Informants stated that association leaders must keep very accurate accounts of funds spent on parties and other activities because of the suspicion among some refugees that leaders are taking money for their own use. One Vietnamese refugee gave the following assessment of the prospects for the associations:

> It will be a few years before people forget the suspicions about others because of what they were during the war. People are only slowly becoming more willing to associate with those of different social classes and occupational backgrounds. Until they do, the development of any large cooperative association will be difficult.

In this regard, a comparison between the refugees and foreign students is useful. Faced with a similar need to cope with the new environment in which they find themselves, foreign students depend largely on fellow nationals who preceded them in U.S. society and at university. National groups, such as the Hong Kong Students Association, serve to bring new students into contact with these "brokers" who possess information which can be incorporated in their own strategies. Foreign students make far greater use of information imparted by these individuals than that by counselors at universities. There are few "patrons" for foreign students in American society or universities, and so success in the system is highly dependent on wise application of strategies largely derived and assisted by these "brokers" (cf. Hendricks and Skinner 1977). The refugees, however, were met by fellow nationals who had gone through processes of adaptation to this country under circumstances different from those they faced. Largely because most of the information and resources needed by the refugees was available through government agencies and sponsors, self-organized associations have only slowly developed and have not functioned in a manner similar to national groups for foreign students.

Both Catholics and Buddhists among the refugees in the Twin Cities would like to establish their own places of worship. While many Catholics attend churches near their residences, once a month mass is also offered by Vietnamese priests. No Buddhist priests are in the Twin Cities, but the Vietnamese Buddhist Association of Minnesota eventually hopes to be able to provide services for the community. The history of other migrant and refugee groups indicates that both religious and non-religious associations play significant roles in adaptation to a new environment. Insufficient time has passed, however, to determine whether or not the Indochinese associations will assume important roles for the communities.

The Expectation of Assimilation

One of the consequences of the dispersal of refugees throughout the country is that pressures to assimilate into the dominant American culture have been heightened. As stated, prior to the evacuation in 1975, there were few concentrations of Vietnamese, such as Chinatowns or "Little Tokyos," in which the refugees could continue to perform occupational and social roles similar to those they were accustomed to in Vietnam. Shortly after the refugees' arrival, a number of individuals and service groups recommended that the refugees be allowed the option of forming their own communities within the United States, as these would permit agricultural and business cooperatives as well as facilitate psychological adjustment (Le 1975, Chau 1975). The historical precedent for such communities certainly exists, as evidenced by Minnesota's settlement pattern of communities comprised of single ethnic or religious groups from Europe. Such recommendations were given little consideration, however.

Ironically, the expectation of assimilation presents itself in a broader U.S. social climate more tolerant of ethnic diversity and supportive of people's efforts to proclaim their cultural identities. Critics of the dispersal policy claim that one of the consequences of achieving the federal government's political objective of low visibility for the resettlement program is that it leaves refugee families and individuals little choice but to accommodate themselves to an alien culture as rapidly as possible, while other groups are supported in retaining their ethnic identities. Dr. Tran Minh Tung writes that many of the difficulties and mental health problems of the refugees stem in part from a policy "which favors an assimilation strategy and de-emphasizes all the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the newcomers in order to speed up their absorption in the mainstreams of American society" (1976:6).

Learning English is seen by Americans assisting the refugees as the single most important thing the Indochinese can do. Mastery of English is considered a necessary survival skill enabling people to function on and off the job. Since policies have been geared toward assimilation, there is also a recognition that assimilation can only occur through language acquisition which would allow the refugees to become aware of, and conform to, American norms of speech and action.

According to Department of State figures compiled from records of refugees while in the relocation camps, thirty-six percent of 20,956 household heads had "good" English ability, while thirty percent had "some" ability (Department of State 1975:11). Given the long American involvement in Vietnam and the positions many of these individuals held, it is not surprising that a sizable segment of the refugee community has some English proficiency. However, most refugees had little English ability upon arrival. Consequently, one of the immediate concerns of those directing the resettlement was to provide English as a Second Language classes. Federal government and private foundation money has been made available for classes conducted by private institutions, vocational schools, and universities.

Since many of the refugees who were employed in Vietnam were civil servants, teachers, or in the military, their skills are not easily transferable to another society. Those who were physicians, engineers, or accountants in U.S. firms found placement in jobs relatively easy, as did the few with degrees from U.S. universities. While in the relocation camps, refugees actively sought to re-establish contact with Americans they had known in Vietnam or companies with which they had dealt, and in many instances these individuals or companies became sponsors and/or employers. There are even cases such as that of a Minnesota company sponsoring the wife of one of its employees in Saigon, who himself was not able to leave, and providing training and education for her children so they eventually can join the company. For most, however, prospects for securing employment were not good. Many have had to take relatively unskilled jobs such as janitors, cooks, assembly line workers, and night watchmen. Individuals who were employed in Vietnam have been encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for retraining at vocational schools. Federal funding for employment and training projects has come from a two million dollar grant to California in June 1976 and a five million dollar grant to thirty-nine other states three months later. According to figures supplied by the Governor's Resettlement Office, at present 150 adults are enrolled in thirty area vocational technical institutes in Minnesota. Employment counseling has been provided by Vietnamese staff in the Department of Employment Services, as well as through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act, the federally funded job-finding and job-training program.

A survey reported by the HEW Task Force for Indochina Refugees reveals that in March-April 1977 nearly eighty-seven percent of male heads of households and sixty-eight percent of female heads were in the labor force. Included in labor force figures are persons who are employed and persons who are unemployed but actively looking for work. Of the Indochinese in the labor force, 94.6 percent of the males were employed and 86.4 percent of the females. For the U.S. population in general, comparable March rates were 93.5 percent and 91.5

percent respectively. Eighty percent of the employed refugees were working forty or more hours per week, with 7.7 percent working 30-39 hours per week.

The same survey indicates wages and salaries for those employed. Weekly income was less than $99 for 23.3 percent, $100-$199 for 65.2 percent, and $200 or more for 9.9 percent, with 1.6 percent not reporting (Task Force for Indochina Refugees 1977:2). According to information released by the Governor's Resettlement Office, in the fall of 1976 forty-one percent of refugee households across the country had yearly incomes of over $9500. Presumably, figures for 1977 will reveal an even higher percentage above this amount.

Despite these figures, the employment situation for many refugees is perceived as one of "underemployment;" that is, that they are employed in jobs below those for which they are qualified. More accurately, the statement that refugees are underemployed refers to the fact that many are in jobs of lower status and salaries than those held in Vietnam. The HEW Task Force has reported that two-thirds of the employed refugees accept jobs below the level of their work in Vietnam (Vu 1977). One of the consequences of displacement from one culture to another is that qualifications and occupational status achieved within the institutional structures and value system of one's own culture are often irrelevant in another. When judged by the qualification standards of U.S. society, many of the refugees cannot be considered underemployed, largely because the language ability and job skills they possess are not marketable in this society. A military general, for example, may not have the qualifications to achieve a position of similar status or remuneration in the United States, and so his employment as a dishwasher is more a reflection of inability to regain a previous occupational status than it is a case of underemployment. Many refugees have accepted the fact that they cannot translate what they were in Vietnam into commensurate positions and salaries, and so have undertaken training to make possessed skills more marketable or to learn new skills. A few, however, have had difficulty reconciling their problems in finding acceptable employment with their previous status.

From the outset of the resettlement program, federal officials stressed that the goal was to aid refugees in becoming financially self-sufficient and that efforts should be made to eliminate the necessity for refugees to become long-term recipients of public assistance. When the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act was passed by Congress, clear indications were given that neither the Executive branch nor the states were to construe the appropriation as a basis for a permanent federal commitment similar to the Cuban refugee program, for which Congress continues to appropriate $90 million annually in assistance to Dade County, Florida. It was predicted that localized private financing by sponsors, combined with existing federal and state employment/training programs, would result both in relatively rapid achievement of self-sufficiency by the refugees and in a limited need for federal expenditures, especially in the area of cash assistance to refugees.

According to provisions of the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, any financial assistance, medical assistance, or other social services provided by the states between April 1975 and September

1977 was reimbursed on a 100 percent basis by HEW. In October 1977 Congress granted a four-year extension for this reimbursement program, with the percentage remaining at 100 until September 30, 1978, and then decreasing by 25 percent during each of the three subsequent years.

Refugees are eligible for public assistance programs through the states. The requirement that applicants fall within certain categories (ie. disability, over sixty-five years of age, or dependent child of single parent or unemployed father) in order to receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC),[4] Medicaid, and social services have been waived. Cash assistance is provided on the basis of need, without regard to family composition or the presence of children. The income and resources of a sponsor are not considered in determining eligibility. Assessment of need and eligibility is done on a case by case basis, and payments are made according to the state's AFDC payment level. In October 1976 new work and training requirements were established which make registration with state employment services and acceptance of appropriate employment or training opportunities mandatory for refugee applicants or recipients of public assistance.

Nationally, the percentage of the total refugee population receiving cash assistance has increased from twelve percent in September 1975, four months after their departure from Vietnam, to thirty-six percent in May 1977, or 52,219 persons (Task Force for Indochina Refugees 1977:21).

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[4] The AFDC program provides financial aid and services to children who have been deprived of parental care and support because of the death, incapacitation, or absence of a parent, or unemployment of the father.

Between December 1, 1976, and May 1, 1977, the number of refugees receiving cash assistance in Minnesota grew from 900 to 1008, an increase of twelve percent.[5] Nationally, there was an eighteen percent increase during the same five-month period. Table I shows the numbers of refugees receiving cash assistance in May 1977 in the ten states having the largest refugee populations, plus the percentages of the populations who are recipients. According to the HEW survey for March-April 1977, 86.4 percent of all refugee households were receiving some wage or salary income from full or part-time jobs, with 13.6 percent solely dependent on cash assistance or other aid.

An employment counselor has estimated that one-quarter of those on cash assistance in Minnesota would qualify under established categories defining eligibility, and therefore are likely to continue receiving assistance even after federal reimbursement to the states has ended. For the most part, the remaining recipients are either in training or are unable to earn enough to exceed income levels disqualifying them for AFDC payments. A few have been characterized as individuals who have refused to take employment or training in areas that do not meet their expectation of appropriate occupational level. The Governor's Resettlement Office admits that the increase in numbers receiving cash assistance is also the result of refugees becoming more aware of its availability and of eligibility requirements.

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[5] The experience of one county, Ramsey (St. Paul), is illustrative of the steady increase in numbers of recipients of cash assistance. In January 1976, one hundred fifty-two people (18 unattached individuals and 47 families) received a total of $9,945, averaging $65 per individual. By May 1977, three hundred forty-three people (19 unattached and 65 families) received $27,637, averaging over $80 per individual.

Table I

Cash Assistance in Ten States Having Largest Numbers of Refugees May 1, 1977

State	Refugee Population*	Number of Refugees Receiving Cash Assistance	Percentage of Population Receiving Cash Assistance
California	30,495	19,300	63%
Texas	11,136	2,381	21%
Pennsylvania	8,187	1,960	24%
Virginia	5,620	1,657	29%
Florida	5,237	1,618	31%
Washington	5,205	2,967	57%
New York	4,749	788	17%
Illinois	4,675	1,246	27%
Minnesota	4,250	1,008	24%
Louisiana	3,916	1,388	35%

Source: Task Force for Indochina Refugees, Report to Congress, June 20, 1977, pp. 20-26.

*The population figures are based on a January 1976 count. Since then, there have been migrations in and out of all these states. No up-to-date figures exist, and as late as June 1977 HEW was using these figures. If the count for Minnesota is adjusted to 3500, which is probably more accurate for June, then the percentage of refugees receiving cash assistance rises to 29.

The drift to public assistance has coincided with the lowering or elimination of financial support by sponsors. Dependence on the resources of sponsors was never intended to be long-term, and most sponsors gradually disengaged themselves from their roles as "patrons." Some refugees felt that decisions regarding their actions were constrained by the paternalism of sponsors, however well-motivated, and as a result sponsorships have often been dissolved by mutual agreement.

Developing communication and occupational skills appropriate for the new environment are the two most obvious areas of difficulty for the refugees. There are other areas of concern, many of which allow for only minor "broker" or "patron" roles by Americans. Maintaining cultural traditions in the home and community is recognized as a problem, especially since young people are already being attracted by aspects of American culture. To counter these influences, the associations established by the refugees have organized cultural activities such as New Years parties and movie screenings. In an open letter to his fellow countrymen, the president of the Vietnamese Alliance in Minnesota encourages participation and expresses the concern of many when he says that:

> Sometimes we look at our children and wonder if these young Vietnamese immigrants will recall their native country when they grow up (Governor's Resettlement Office 1976:8).

Vietnamese language classes have been organized for children, but reports are that enrollement has been very small. Factors such as limited financial resources, suspicions of association leaders' motives, and status consciousness inhibiting a sense of commonality have retarded the development of community-wide cultural activities.

Informants have stressed the traditional strength of the Vietnamese family and the family's importance in preserving cultural identity. Some of the strains of adaptation have already appeared in some families, notably in cases where the father's traditional authority and role as provider have been undercut by his difficulty in regaining the social status and income level equal to that of his position in Vietnam (cf. Tran 1976). In some instances, children and wives have been able to earn more than fathers. There have been reports of children with incomes larger than those of parents going against fathers' orders; for example, a son buying his own car instead of contributing that money to the family's support as his father had expected him to do. On the other hand, there have been instances such as that of two sons refusing high-paying job offers until their father had been hired for some sort of position.

Those who are here with all or some of their family remaining in Vietnam have experienced severe bouts of loneliness and depression. According to one social worker, the unattached individuals especially are experiencing disorientation and doubts about their futures because they "have no moorings without their families." Some of the families which have been resettled in small towns where they are the only Vietnamese, and perhaps the only non-whites, have felt so isolated that they have moved to Minneapolis or St. Paul. Much of the migration from small towns to cities and from state to state is prompted by refugees' desires to re-establish proximity to relatives and friends and to become part of communities of their own countrymen or status group.

Refugees having family members still in Vietnam would like to bring them to this country. Letters can be sent between the U.S. and Vietnam, and so in some instances family members in Vietnam are aware of individuals' situations in this country. Undoubtedly, relatives are among those who have left Vietnam since 1975. Many have left by boat, and estimates are that over 8000 "boat people," as they are being called, either have landed in countries neighboring Vietnam or are living on boats still at sea. A variety of political and legal reasons account for the inability of Southeast and East Asian nations to grant permanent stays to these people. Already, nearly 100,000 Indochinese refugees are in Thailand, the majority being Laotian (cf. Andelman 1977, Shaplen 1977).

It is known in Vietnam that the United States has admitted large numbers of refugees. The prospect of joining family members in the U.S. has served to "pull" people out of a Vietnam at peace as much as the victory of the National Liberation Front and the North has served to "push" them into self-exile. This is not without precedent, as Fagen et al. (1968) recognize that the possibility of admission to the U.S. certainly contributed to the decisions of many Cubans to migrate.

The special programs for admitting more refugees tacitly acknowledge that people are being "pulled" out of Vietnam by hopes of rejoining family members or reaching the United States. In March 1977, the Department of State initiated a program to admit one hundred applicants per month, plus their spouses and minor children. Besides having left by boat, the person must qualify under one of three categories: close relatives of persons already in the U.S., former employees of the United States missions in Indochina, or those whose association with U.S. programs or policies in Indochina was especially close (HEW Task Force for Indochina Refugees 1977:67). Since spring of this year, the number of refugees leaving by boat has risen from about 500 a month to 1500.

In August 1977, the Department of State decided to admit 15,000 more refugees from among those in other countries and on boats. Over eight thousand are coming from Vietnam, mostly "boat people," with six thousand from Laos and the remaining from Cambodia[6] (Gwertzman 1977a, Kamm 1977). In December, the decision was made to seek emergency admission for an additional 10,000 Vietnamese "boat people," five thousand to be admitted immediately and the other 5000 to be admitted from among refugees expected to flee Vietnam in the coming months (Gwertzman 1977b). Applications for admission under these programs are being evaluated on the basis of four categories:

1) Close relatives of U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or persons in the United States as refugees.

2) Former U.S. Government employees who held supervisory or otherwise meaningful positions for at least six months subsequent to January 1, 1972. Janitors, drivers, gardeners, and other such workers are excluded unless they were employed for at least ten years.

3) People who worked closely with U.S. missions, were educated in American schools, or whose status or position in the former governments poses particular obstacles to their

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[6] Cambodians make up the smallest portion of the refugees to be admitted largely because the majority of those who have left Cambodia have sought refuge in Vietnam, 60,000 as compared with 25,000 in Thailand (Jensen 1977).

absorption into third countries. This includes people whose personal accomplishments or eminence would benefit U.S. society.

4) A limited number of people who do not fall within one of the preceding categories, but in whose case there are compelling reasons for admission (*e.g*. widow of long-time U.S. Government employee whose death was duty related).

Journalist Robert Shaplen (1977) reports that Immigration and Naturalization Service officers try to distinguish between those who flee for legitimate political or personal reasons and those who do so primarily to better themselves, although the line is hard to draw. Those considered to have unsavory backgrounds, such as association with Chinese gangs in Saigon, are excluded.

Statements by "boat people" taken to Israel in July confirm the strength of the desire to join relatives in the U.S., France, or Canada, as many indicated that they hoped Israel would be only a temporary stop on the way to these countries. Refugees already in the U.S. have urged that efforts be made to admit relatives, and they are apprehensive about whether or not their relatives will be included. The refugee associations in Minnesota plan to sponsor some of the families who come to the state. The first family to arrive under the August program was a group of 13 who came to join a brother living in the Minneapolis suburb of Hopkins. In emphasizing the importance of family ties, informants have ventured that the possibility of being reunited with family members would be the major reason why some refugees would consider returning to Vietnam, although they prefer to take advantage of the opportunity to bring relatives to this country.

Adaptation by Self-Sufficiency or Dependency?

In a people's process of adapting to a new social and economic situation, "brokers" and "patrons" usually are offering their assistance on the basis of certain assumptions about what the goals of their "clients" are or should be and about how such assistance should be used. It is the rare case, however, in which the goals attributed to "clients" are congruent with the adapting people's own perception of what they can or should achieve. Such divergence is especially likely in cases where the "brokers/patrons" and the adapting people are of different cultures and have different life experiences.

As stated, the aim of the resettlement program has been to help the refugees achieve self-sufficiency. It was presumed that assistance provided would be short-term, only until individuals and families had assimilated sufficiently for viable participation in the U.S. labor market. From a practical standpoint, self-sufficiency and assimilation were seen as necessary and desirable goals. Within the American value system, self-sufficiency holds a high position. We also consider one of the strengths of American society to be its history as a "melting pot" of people from many countries. The prescriptions for the refugees' adaptation have been influenced by these two notions, though it is known by many, and perhaps sensed by the refugees, that neither is fully substantiated by America's social history.

Informants provided differing assessments of the chances for the refugees to achieve self-sufficiency, as well as a varied picture of the extent to which the refugees have adopted self-sufficiency as a goal. Supporting a view of refugees as seeking self-sufficiency are examples of those who have found good jobs based on previous qualifications or connections and those who have been resourceful in developing new marketable skills. One of the latter cases is a fisherman who learned to sew while in a relocation camp and now has a good income working as a tailor. Seven unattached young men, living together in their sponsoring church's old parsonage, have been able to provide completely for themselves through odd jobs since the second month after their arrival. In a short summary of the history of the resettlement program, the Governor's Resettlement Office gives the following picture:

> Fortunately, the Indo-Chinese are well-known to be industrious and highly motivated. They are resourceful, having survived a long-lasting war in their homeland. A majority have demonstrated their ability and have become self-sufficient in the rather short time they have lived in the United States. This compares favorably with other refugee groups (Governor's Resettlement Office 1977:3).

Some Vietnamese and Americans who have assisted the refugees, however, indicate that portents of dependency are already observable in the actions and statements of some refugees. Aspects of the experiences of sponsors and of the use of public assistance by refugees are cited as the basis for this concern.

Direct responsibility for assisting the refugees during the initial months rested with a multiplicity of sponsors. One of the consequences was that there were great differences in sponsors' financial capabilities. Because of the financial commitment required, many churches and individuals in relatively affluent areas came forward to be sponsors. Other sponsors, while less affluent, felt a similar desire to make a contribution to what they believed was an humanitarian effort. While the voluntary agencies tried to ensure that minimum maintenance requirements for a sponsor's charges were met, noticeable differences among what refugee families or individuals were receiving from sponsors soon became apparent. For example, a church in an affluent area might provide a family with a large house, good furniture, a sizable amount of pocket money, and might even help finance a new car. Churches with fewer resources might provide an appartment, used furniture gathered from congregation members' basements, minimal amounts of pocket money, and might encourage the purchase of a used car.

According to Vietnamese informants, many refugees could not understand why they were receiving less assistance from sponsors than were others. As far as the refugees were concerned, they were all in the same situation as displaced persons, and so should be treated equally. They argued that they had not selected their own sponsors, but had been assigned them. Therefore, they reasoned, it was unfair for some people to receive more assistance than others simply by fortuitously having been given particular sponsors. Those people who had been fairly well-off in Vietnam and who had possessed a measure of status were especially sensitive to such disparities. Not yet disabused of the belief that Americans are uniformly wealthy, some refugees were slow to appreciate the differing capabilities and degrees of sacrifice of their sponsors. A few refugees, in fact, assumed that churches were heavily subsidized by the federal government.

Instances of refugees presenting explicit demands that sponsors make certain purchases or provide increased financing were not uncommon, although hints usually were dropped in the presence of people whom they thought would carry this message to their sponsors. For example, some families expected their sponsoring churches to buy them new cars, not sensitive to the fact that most congregation members drove used cars. Similarly, soon after being placed with a sponsor, some families were asking that sponsors pay for a child's university education, not appreciating the difficulty sponsors were having in financing their own children's education. The following instance was provided as an example of a sponsoring church finding its generosity insufficient for a family:

> Earlier this year, a church in an affluent suburb bought a $70,000 home for the family it was sponsoring. The family had been living in another house owned by the church, for which the family was paying very little rent. The church worked out financing arrangements on the new house which would allow the family to make small rent payments until they had saved enough for a small down payment, at which point ownership would be transferred to them. Thinking that the family understood this, church members were surprised to discover that the family actually thought the house was to be a gift. The family indicated that church members were unreasonable in thinking that the family could earn enough to save for the down payment until after at least fifteen years, and putting aside some money each month would only increase their hardship. Soon after this misunderstanding the family decided to move to California. Before leaving, however, they let it be known that they expected the church to buy them a new station wagon as a "farewell gift."

Vietnamese informants have also revealed that a few families having sizable amounts of money brought from Vietnam did not inform their sponsors of this in hopes of obtaining greater support.

Sponsors' generosity, of course, fed assumptions about the unlimited nature of their assistance. Living as many refugees did in the same affluent area as their sponsors, the refugees did not find their environment supportive of clearly-defined notions about limits to sponsors' largesse. Sponsoring groups often unwittingly increased expectations by telling refugees not to hesitate in informing them about needs and by giving the impression that assistance was not a financial burden on the sponsoring group. Believing that humanitarian assistance should not appear contractual, many sponsors were reluctant to strictly define what they would provide.

Incidents occurred which reveal that sponsors and refugees had very different views about the process of resettlement. Some sponsors were disturbed when the refugees did not act in a way considered appropriate to their being refugees. For example, some sponsors assumed that refugees should accept menial jobs just to keep food on the table, should postpone purchasing luxury items and expensive Asian foodstuffs, and should drive used cars rather than new ones. Accepting the need to take menial jobs was not easy for someone whose background and qualifications were at a higher level. A number of men preferred to enter vocational schools and go on public assistance during this period of training. According to some informants, sponsors' admonitions to postpone retraining until a family was more self-sufficient were partly motivated by feelings that having their charges on public assistance betrayed a failure by the sponsor to provide adequate maintenance and foster self-sufficiency.

While willing to identify themselves as "refugees" because of the assistance rendered as a consequence of occupying this status, many people were confused when confronted with American notions about how a refugee should act. Migration from one country to another has not automatically destroyed their sense of who they are, nor has it lowered their estimation of what constitutes an acceptable lifestyle. For example, people have been especially eager to purchase new, and generally large, automobiles. Some sponsors felt that new cars did not fit the image of being a refugee and that resources would be more wisely applied elsewhere. For many Americans, ownership of a luxury automobile is a statement of achieved or hoped-for status. For many refugees, it is also a statement of status, temporarily lost but not abandoned. Maintaining status distinctions among themselves is important to those refugees whose discomfort is increased by sharing similar financial problems with fishermen and others considered lower class. In trying to cope with an alien culture, it is comforting to be able to maintain some of the outward signs of what people consider themselves to be. Purchasing luxury items, which they see in abundance, is one way to do this, especially since their previous status and self-identity are often unconfirmed by the larger society. One informant has also stated that especially among Northerners, the restraint on making major purchases in order to save for the future has been abandoned, because on two occasions those futures have disappeared.

Some of the criticism of refugees' extravagance is the result of failure to appreciate their resourcefulness in getting the items they want. For example, members of a sponsoring church in Minneapolis unknowingly duplicated their gifts to a family by providing four old black and white television sets, two of which did not work. The father was familiar with electronics and so was able to repair the sets. Through trades, he obtained a color tube to replace the one in the console and a new black and white portable in exchange for the three smaller sets. Before being informed of the father's ingenuity, church members were disturbed to see these items in the family's home.

A concern expressed by many informants is that an attitude of "getting as much out of the system as possible" is present among many of those who are receiving public assistance. Some refugees are described as being willing to allow the government to provide for them as long as possible. For example, a fifty-seven year old man has stated that he is satisfied to live on public assistance for the rest of his life rather than seek work. Examples have been cited of refugees falsifying income amounts, marital status, and family size on documents submitted for public assistance.

Informants explained that many refugees view public assistance as an entitlement, and that eligibility requirements are either not understood or are considered irrelevant to obtaining what they believe they need and deserve. Some refugees have expressed the view that the United States owes them their livelihood, arguing that their situation is the result of the U.S. prematurely abandoning the war. Not yet sophisticated enough to appreciate the turmoil the war caused in this country, they do not see outward signs of America's inability to continue the fight. Whether or not the feeling of entitlement stems from a sense that the U.S. has an obligation to them, few refugees doubt the federal government's ability to provide support. Having seen millions of dollars poured into Vietnam during the war, many refugees are convinced that federal expenditures for their support can hardly make a dent in U.S. coffers. One of the voluntary agencies reports having a few individuals accuse them of blocking the flow of federal funds believed earmarked for their support.

The desire to give the appearance that a family has been able to translate its status in Vietnam into success in this country has been offered as one explanation for the demands placed on sponsors and the willing acceptance of public assistance. Also, one informant believes that parents are consciously trying to maintain the home environment as pleasant and comfortable for their children so as to counteract the appeal of American culture, and to do so requires purchases of luxury items and expenditures beyond what is necessary simply for subsistence. The concern to do this is seen as overriding considerations of eligibility requirements and the misunderstandings with sponsors.

While a strong case can be made that those receiving cash assistance can use the support, the social motivations of some for applying for cash assistance cannot be ignored. Maintaining the appearance of social status is only one side of the coin, however. In the Twin Cities are some wealthy men, including former high government officials, whom other refugees believe gained their wealth through corruption. According to Vietnamese informants, these men are trying to hide their wealth, partly to ward off demands that they provide financial support to fellow nationals. Trying to present an appearance of having limited financial resources, some of these families have applied for cash assistance.

Informants have also indicated that it is presumptuous to expect that Vietnamese will bring the same approach to their interactions with government bureaucracies and other institutions as do Americans. Underlying any individual's interaction with institutions having authority over desired resources are cultural assumptions about how to represent one's request and about the limits on manipulating the situation to obtain an acceptable response from the institution. For example, while Americans may believe that public institutions operate according to a body of regulations which apply impartially to everyone, Vietnamese have been described as having a more "personalized" approach to institutionalized authority. That is, there is an orientation toward viewing institutions as basically run by people, with the full range of human qualities and the susceptibility to being influenced, rather than by impersonal regulations uniformly adhered to (Center for Applied Linguistics 1976:7). From the refugees' perspective, this "personalized" approach to institutions has been validated by the roles of some sponsors and state officials as "brokers" for the refugees in obtaining resources and in influencing government actions. These "brokers" have often claimed personal responsibility, or have been perceived as having such, for benefits accruing to the refugees. As a result, the refugees frequently have not been made aware of the actual legal and political factors affecting the actions of governmental, social and educational institutions.

Concern has also been expressed that refugee families are making uninformed decisions in their processes of adaptation. The situation cited most often is that of families which leave jobs and sponsor-provided housing in Minnesota to go to states such as California or Texas, either to join relatives or friends or to escape the unaccustomed cold of Minnesota's winters. The number of Indochinese in the state has dropped from 4250 in January 1976 to approximately 3200 in the fall of 1977. Despite warnings by the voluntary agencies that California's unemployment rate and cost of living are higher than in other states, large numbers from across the country have moved there, especially to the southern part. In many instances, they have left without prior consultation with sponsors or the voluntary agencies. In an open letter to families considering moving to California, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service of San Francisco has cautioned refugees that when they leave a sponsor they are saying they are able to provide for themselves and no longer need, nor should expect, sponsor assistance in their new location.

> This is a free country and you can move about it whenever you like, but only with the understanding you do so on your own and at your own expense (1977).

Many of the families which left sponsor support in Minnesota have become heavily dependent on public assistance in the states to which they moved. Encouraging refugees to contemplate moving only when they are financially secure, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service admonishes that sudden movements without consulting sponsors hinder efforts to plan for the refugees' well-being while also producing "disappointment and possible resentment [by sponsors] which affects future movements of stateless people--both from Southeast Asia and other areas of the world" (Task Force for Indochina Refugees 1977:83).

While sharing the same social category and being identifiable as a distinct people, the refugees have not adopted uniform approaches in adapting to U.S. society. As indicated, statistics and information provided by those interviewed present evidence supporting a view that some refugees have succeeded or are making progress in attaining self-sufficiency while others are moving toward a reliance on welfare and other forms of outside support. The future is likely to reveal similarly diverse patterns of financial maintenance, as those who have been able to establish financial bases expand upon them and as many of those who are receiving outside support continue to do so and seek new sources.

The growing reliance on public assistance was one of the reasons many Congressmen and HEW officials were reluctant to see appropriations for cash assistance go beyond the September 30, 1977, expiration of the Indochina Refugee Assistance Program. Those who opposed extension of the special legislation contended that treating the refugees like the rest of American society was more likely to result in self-sufficiency. The federal government's institutionalization of the Cuban program was considered to have prolonged thinking of the Cubans as refugees, with financial and social consequences many hoped to avoid in the case of the Indochinese. State governments, however, were concerned that an end to federal reimbursement for cash assistance would have shifted the burden to state revenues and perhaps hindered refugees in gaining marketable skills through programs designed to improve qualifications. There was some resentment by state officials that the federal government seemed willing to pass to the states responsibility for a program initiated by Washington. The fear was expressed that refugees would migrate to those states, such as Minnesota, which provide higher levels of public assistance. Some of the states with large refugee populations lobbied for a three-year extension of the legislation with step-by-step phasing out of cash assistance and special programs. The four-year extension, with reduced percentages of reimbursement to the states for cash assistance beginning after September 1978, passed Congress partly because of these fears.

While the "parolee" status had been interpreted by legislatures and public institutions to allow the refugees access to many of the public programs available to permanent residents and citizens, attainment of permanent resident status will guarantee access to these resources on the basis of an irrevocable legal status rather than because of special dispensations. Permanent resident status will benefit the refugees by opening up government jobs and by allowing those with military training to apply it in the armed forces. It will also qualify them for some forms of public assistance for which they were previously ineligible.

The major implication of permanent resident status is that the likelihood of the refugees' long-term presence in this country is confirmed, and the society and its institutions must recognize this fact in more specific terms than was necessary or possible when the refugees occupied the ambiguous status of "parolee." Because higher education seems to offer the Indochinese a means for advancement and establishment of social status, universities and colleges will figure prominently in how the society formulates its response to the Indochinese and in influencing the actions taken by the refugees as they continue their process of adaptation. It is to higher education that the discussion now turns.

Part II: Indochinese Students at the University

A Description

The discussion of the refugees' social backgrounds and experiences since arriving in the United States provides the basis for looking at those individuals who have chosen to undertake post-secondary education. A description of the refugee students in higher education is enhanced by an understanding of the patterns of adaptation of the larger community of which they are part. Family and educational backgrounds, experiences in the U.S., and assumptions about post-secondary education must be included in our description.

While Indochinese are attending other post-secondary institutions in Minnesota, by far the largest number are enrolled at the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities. In the beginning of the 1977-78 academic year, 203 Indochinese students were officially enrolled as degree-pursuing students.[7] In addition, 29 were attending English as a Second

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[7] Definitions of student status are numerous, even within the institution. From the viewpoint of the official record keeper, the Office of Admissions and Records, a student is an individual who, having presented evidence of ability to pursue academic work, is an "admitted" student and then after payment of fees is an "enrolled" student. Other categories of individuals may attend the University for particular programs such as English as a Second Language without being counted as students. Students enrolled in Continuing Education programs (night classes) typically are not counted unless they are also enrolled for day school classes. This technical definition by which University records are kept has made identification of our population difficult. Compounding this problem has been the interstitial position of the refugees in regard to identification in computer files. In addition to being Indochinese, they are (for tuition purposes) considered as residents of Minnesota. Thus we found an inconsistency in coding that data element used to identify this group: sometimes they were classified as Vietnamese, Cambodian, or Laotian (foreign student categories) and sometimes as Minnesota residents. Computer-generated lists were incomplete, and lists of students such as those provided by the Vietnamese Student Association included many individuals present around the University in other than an official student category.

Language classes in an unadmitted student status. Including those enrolled in extension classes and in other such programs would thus make the Indochinese student community at the University of Minnesota number nearly 250. Almost all of these students come from Vietnam.

Post-secondary institutions throughout the state reported an additional 304, of whom 198 were enrolled in area vocational technical institutes. It would seem, then, that post-secondary institutions are used extensively by the Indochinese. While federally funded aid programs for refugees recognize language and vocational training as warranting direct or indirect funding, such is not the case for those in academic programs. As we shall later discuss in detail, the relatively widespread use of higher education without offsetting subsidies to the institution is of significance.

While the University of Minnesota's computer files provide some demographic information about the students, much of the data which we sought is not on the computer tapes, is incomplete, or is in a form unusable for describing the students. Therefore, we turned to a second source of demographic information; specifically, the financial aid applications for the 1977-78 academic year. Although over 250 Indochinese submitted financial aid applications, we isolated 178 who actually enrolled. Because the information obtained from these applications is more extensive than that contained in the University's computer files, most of our demographic data is based on this group of 178 persons.

According to Indochinese students' perceptions of academic class level, forty-two percent are freshmen. This does not mean that all of these students have had no previous post-secondary education, as in fact some have attended colleges or universities before and are probably indicating that they are "freshmen" in the sense of being in their first year at the University of Minnesota. Thirty-four percent indicate they are sophomores, eleven percent juniors, seven percent seniors, and six percent graduate students.

Indochinese students' ages range from 16 to 46 years, with an average age of twenty-two. The fact that they are generally older than American students who enter university immediately after graduating from high school is partly attributable to the disruption which has occurred in many of their lives. Some of the young men were conscripted into the military either during or prior to entering university in Vietnam. Some who could have entered post-secondary institutions upon arriving in the U.S. were unable to do so until after they had taken English courses or had worked to meet immediate financial needs for themselves or their families. Only slightly more than one-tenth of the students are over twenty-seven years old.

Men outnumber women by two to one among the Indochinese students. For all students on the Twin Cities' campuses the ratio is about three to two. While the sizable number of Indochinese women students might seem predictable from the fact that there is about an equal number of females as males among the refugee population nationally (Task Force for Indochina Refugees 1977:27), the proportion of Indochinese university students who are women is significant for what it reveals about social backgrounds. Were the refugees primarily from rural areas in their homelands, the number of women students would be smaller.

Compared to urban professional families, rural families in Asia generally place less emphasis on higher education for women and do not expect women to enter professional careers. Being from middle class urban families, the women who are attending the University were probably raised in social environments which encouraged preparation for higher education and for urban occupations requiring specialized skills.

Eighty-nine percent of the Indochinese students are not married. This is roughly comparable to undergraduates in general (Hendricks and Skinner 1975). Of the eleven percent of Indochinese students who are married, three-quarters have either one or no dependent children. Those having three or more dependent children are in their thirties or forties. The large number of single students reflects a general preference for postponing marriage until after a person is established in a career.

Given that most of the refugees have urban professional family backgrounds, it is not surprising to find a sizable number who have attended post-secondary institutions in Vietnam or elsewhere before arriving in the U.S. Although the data are incomplete, out of 178 students forty-four indicated they have studied at universities outside the U.S. Except for the University of Dalat, all of the post-secondary schools attended in Vietnam were in Saigon, specifically the University of Saigon, University of Minh Duc, and the University of Van Hanh. A few students have studied at universities in France, Australia, and Japan. These students are not all upperclassmen; in fact, one-quarter of the first- and second-year students have attended universities outside the U.S.

An HEW survey of available records of 52,000 refugees eighteen years of age and over reveals highest education levels being post-graduate work for four percent, university for twenty-one percent, secondary school for forty-nine percent, elementary school for twenty-three percent, and no formal education for three percent (Task Force for Indochina Refugees 1977:28). The relatively high education levels of the refugees have been pointed to as a significant characteristic, as revealed by the following excerpt from a short history of the resettlement program published by the Governor's Resettlement Office:

> When the refugee program was first begun...there were widespread fears that many of the Vietnamese and Cambodians brought to this country...might be uneducated farmers, sailors, soldiers, bargirls and the like who would have difficulty in becoming self-sufficient. A computer study of the refugees' records indicates that, on the contrary, most of those classified as heads of household have high school, college or post-graduate educations (May 1977:3).

The educational backgrounds of many of the parents of students attending the University have undoubtedly influenced students both to aspire to obtain a university degree and to take for granted that they would go to university. The number of university students and their educational backgrounds would be of a different order were the refugee population composed to a greater degree of those "marginal" people created by the social disruption accompanying the war.

For a sizable number, the University of Minnesota is not the first American post-secondary institution attended. Fifty students reported having attended community colleges, vocational technical institutes, and universities and colleges in other states. For some, studying at community colleges provided a chance to increase language skills before coming to the University. The proximity of the community colleges or vocational technical institutes to their homes also allowed students to contribute to their families' incomes through part-time employment in the area during the initial period of social and economic adjustment.

When the refugees arrived in this country, young people of elementary or secondary school age were required to enter schools. Some secondary schools, such as Southwest in Minneapolis and Edina West, instituted special programs to aid students in developing English skills for regular classes. Typically, a student spent part of a school day in special English classes and part in courses such as algebra, chemistry, French, typing, gym, home economics, and music. While having difficulty with classes requiring verbal and writing skills, the Indochinese excelled in mathematics classes, even surpassing their American counterparts according to some educators (Sitomer and Jones 1976). A Department of Education survey taken in May 1976 revealed that over one thousand refugee students were attending elementary or secondary schools in the state.

During the past year, however, many people in the Vietnamese community have become concerned about the number of secondary school students who have dropped out of school. No one has an accurate count of how many individuals have left school, but informants provided examples of young people who had been attracted by the possibility of working full-time so as to earn enough to buy cars or to increase support for their families. The drop-out rate is reportedly highest among those who were the only or one of the few Vietnamese in a school, as they were more subject to loneliness and frustration stemming from difficulties in participating with American students in regular courses and activities. The drop-out rate in the future is likely to decrease, since younger children now in school do not have the temptation to quit in favor of seeking employment and have more time to become socialized to the American education system. As over forty percent of the national refugee population are under eighteen years of age (Task Force for Indochina Refugees 1977:27), it can be expected that a sizable number of Indochinese students will seek admission to post-secondary institutions in the near future.

Over one-quarter of the Indochinese students attending the University have graduated from U.S. high schools, most of which are in Minnesota. Among students who graduated from secondary schools in Vietnam, a number indicated they have received diplomas from some of the better schools in the nation, notably Marie Curie and Petrus Ky.

University records of enrolled students during Fall 1977 reveal the distribution of Indochinese students among collegial units. This is presented in Table II. Of particular interest, however, are individual career choices which are not revealed by choice of college, especially since many professional schools are not entered until after achieving a baccalaureate degree. A summary of stated career objectives on the financial aid application form is indicated in Table III. The large numbers planning to enter engineering, business, and health care professions are not surprising, as these are the most prestigious occupations in Vietnam. Gaining admittance to university in Vietnam, especially to medical or engineering programs, is very difficult, and only a small number qualify through entrance

Table II

Distribution of Indochinese Students Within the University Collegial Units

Institute of Technology	37%
College of Liberal Arts	35%
General College	13%
Graduate School	6%
Agriculture and Home Economics	3%
Pharmacy	2%
Business	2%
Biological Science	<1%
Medical and Dental Schools	1%

Table III

Career Goals of Indochinese Students

Engineering	37%
Health care (medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, medical technology)	18%
Business (accounting, business administration, banking)	16%
Computer science	8%
Other physical sciences (chemistry, biology)	3%
Agriculture and veterinary medicine	2%
Mathematics	2%
Others (journalism, teaching, art, law)	4%
Data unavailable	10%

examinations given at the end of secondary school years. In many cases, Vietnamese students view the comparatively open admissions policies of American universities as offering a greater chance to attain these prestigious occupations than did the education system in Vietnam, and so they have been attracted to fields once thought beyond their reach.

The strong backgrounds of many in computational skills and sciences also account for their selection of engineering, health care, computer science, and accounting. These fields are thought to be less dependent on verbal and writing skills. The Institute of Technology reports that the Vietnamese who are pursuing engineering programs have performed quite well, and those Vietnamese who graduated from the Institute of Technology in the 1976-77 academic year have been hired for positions roughly comparable to those obtained by American graduates.

The United States is not the only society in which these students are gauging the marketability of their professional skills. Some students are reported to have chosen engineering and medicine because they believe these are universally applicable skills, not dependent on the values or institutions of any particular culture. One unattached young man hopes to be able to use his engineering degree to "bargain" with the new government for a desired position and perquisites when he returns to Vietnam.

Informants have suggested that the concentration in a few fields can be partly attributed to the desire of some to undertake their studies while surrounded by fellow nationals. There have been reports of students who were undecided about what program to enter finally deciding to go into the same program as their close friends. Going through a structured academic program as a group allows for each member always to be taking any particular course at the same time as one of his or her fellows. This can be viewed as an adaptive strategy for getting through the program, as individuals can help each other in understanding lectures and preparing assignments. When viewed from this perspective, it is easier to comprehend the basis for Indochinese students' complaints when taking a course with a friend proves to be impossible. Given the difficulty some students will continue to have in understanding lectures and texts, working out common problems with fellow nationals may meet immediate needs as efficiently as would participating in special tutorials. The experience of the Institute of Technology is significant in this regard. An advanced Vietnamese student was designated as a tutor for other Vietnamese students, but was seldom contacted.

Motivations for Attending University

An uninformed view of the refugees would question how individuals could choose to enter higher education. The stereotype of "refugees" as poor and struggling would seem to preclude choosing to attend university. In fact, there are identifiable motivations among the Indochinese for electing to go to university, some of which have already been alluded to. Of course, other alternatives are available to individuals traditionally considered of college age, notably attending area vocational technical schools, taking full-time employment, or caring for children. According to a rough estimate, however, nearly one-quarter of the refugee population between 18 and 24 years of age in the state are enrolled in the University of Minnesota, and total enrollment including other universities and colleges exceeds one-third.

In discussing why students have chosen to come to the University, it must be emphasized that the Indochinese students are not a homogeneous group. We have identified two distinct categories: 1) students from urban professional family backgrounds, and 2) a smaller number of students from rural or lower class families. While unattached males make up a large proportion of the latter category, there are also unattached males who come from urban professional families.

As indicated previously, most students are operating out of one of two distinct social situations: either as part of a family unit or as an unattached individual. This is revealed by data on Vietnamese students at the University. Thirty-six percent have both parents in Minnesota; seventeen percent have one parent in Minnesota; eight percent have both parents in another state; and twenty-three percent have both parents in Vietnam. For sixteen percent either no information is available or parents can be assumed to be deceased. This means that about three out of five students have one or both parents in this country or Europe. Those students who are part of family units are conscious of the obligations to family which have been defined by their culture, and do not have the kind of social autonomy we assume is possessed by American students. Those who are unattached are in the different position of often feeling lost without family support and frustrated by the demands of their unaccustomed independence.

Some Vietnamese informants have asserted that a further division is appropriate for describing university students. On one side are those students whom these informants consider academically qualified to do university work and who probably would have attended university were they still in a politically-unchanged Vietnam. On the other are those who are evaluated as less capable of performing well in higher education. These individuals may not have been able to pass entrance examinations for certain university programs in Vietnam. According to informants, the wiser decision would have been to learn a marketable skill in vocational technical school, rather than pursue a degree with an uncertain promise of lucrative employment.

Like the French system after which it was modeled, the Vietnamese education system was pyramidal in terms of the numbers of students enrolled at its various levels. The first five years of elementary school were mandatory for all children. After that, promotion to higher levels was based on success in entrance examinations. Following completion of twelve years of elementary and secondary school, students could enter university. A secondary school teacher in Vietnam estimates that only one percent of those who entered primary school made it to university. Most of the professional programs admitted students on the basis of highly competitive examinations, and among these programs were education, national administration, engineering, pharmacy, dentistry, and medicine. The limited numbers of students who were able to enter and complete these programs were virtually guaranteed financially rewarding and prestigious positions. Entrance to programs of letters and arts, science, and law was less restricted, but even those who completed these programs were easily employed upon graduation because of the high value placed on their academic achievements. Enrollment in the less-restricted programs swelled in later years because many men entered university as refuge against conscription into the military (and certain death, according to one young man).

The assumption that a university degree will ensure stable and lucrative employment is the pre-eminent reason for attending university. Some Vietnamese employment counselors and others have expressed concern that students are bringing to university unrealistic expectations about the marketability of a degree. According to these counselors, the value placed on university degrees is deeply implanted and difficult to put aside even when the differences between Vietnamese and American education systems have been explained to young people.

While their intentions to master professional skills cannot be underestimated, the Vietnamese are also approaching university education with an explicit assumption that what the University offers them are credentials which they hope can be translated into desired social and occupational statuses. This is not to say that American students do not also view the University in this way, but the more elitist education system in Vietnam makes the refugee students especially conscious of institutional certification for social roles (cf. Office of Education Refugee Assistance Task Force 1975).

The value placed on higher education is often more fully developed among the older generation. Parents have encouraged, and on occasion pressured, sons and daughters to go to university. Parents with middle and upper class backgrounds view post-secondary education as a means to recapture for their children the status they had attained in Vietnam.

For some, having a son or daughter in university contributes to the affirmation that the family has maintained the status and accompanying prerogatives of a previous position in Vietnam. There are also parents who see in the American education system an opportunity for their children which may not have been obtainable in Vietnam because of the competitive entrance examinations. While in Vietnam, some parents reportedly dreamed of sending sons and daughters to Western universities, and so now wish to take advantage of the opportunity suddenly available to them.

As indicated, within the Vietnamese community status distinctions based on what people were in Vietnam continue to influence social interaction. Although important for intra-community relationships and activities, the previous status of a household head is no guarantee in the new American environment that his or her children will move more easily into better positions than will children of lower class families. For young people, therefore, the future is more open in terms of which among them will attain high status positions. Consequently, in the competition for desirable occupations, both the advantages of upper class family backgrounds and the disadvantages of lower class origins are diminished. While some students' secondary school records and performance on entrance examinations in Vietnam may have restricted them in pursuing prestigious occupations in their homeland, these students recognize that their personal histories have less relevance for career choice and likelihood of success in U.S. society. The belief is held by many, especially by the unattached individuals, that the arenas in which the distribution of occupational statuses will be established are post-secondary educational institutions. Therefore, some students who are considered by older Vietnamese to be unqualified for university work have been tempted to reach for something they may have previously assumed was not possible. These students are consciously experimenting with university education, not supported in their decision to attend by their elders nor confident in their ability to succeed. American universities' relative "openness" permits them to do this, but it remains to be seen how students respond to the demands for independent action and the ambiguities which are correlates of the system's openness.

Although it is doubtful that any Vietnamese student decided to go to the University solely because close friends were going, informants acknowledged that this was a factor in some students' decisions. That close friends had concluded that the most appropriate next step after high school or a series of low-paying jobs was entering university undoubtedly encouraged other individuals to do the same. Some of the young people who are here without family have reportedly been particularly influenced by the decisions of fellows to go to university.

The fact that friends are attending the University of Minnesota has almost certainly influenced individuals already determined to pursue post-secondary education to choose the University over other schools. As indicated, many students apparently prefer going through their academic programs in conjunction with others rather than being one of few Vietnamese at a college. High school counselors and others have related instances when they were surprised to learn that a student who had made plans in the spring to enter a particular post-secondary institution changed to the University by summer. Such switching to the University even occurred in cases where other schools had offered students sizable scholarships from sources other than federal programs.

Despite the attraction of being in the same environment as others from one's own culture, it cannot be assumed that a Vietnamese student feels affinity toward all other Vietnamese students. Some of the same social and political cleavages which exist among older Vietnamese in the larger community also are present among students. Specifically, these divisions have emerged in competition for power among factions of the Vietnamese Students Association. Unlike most campus groups organized by students from other countries, the Vietnamese Students Association has standing behind it a larger community whose political and social conflicts are extended to the campus-based organization. Therefore, the important reference groups for many Vietnamese students are in fact fairly small. The formation of friendships has been influenced by political and religious beliefs, as well as social and educational backgrounds.

Besides being drawn to the University of Minnesota because greater numbers increase the likelihood of finding fellow nationals with whom a person is socially and politically compatible, individuals have also perceived the University as being more prestigious than other post-secondary institutions. Since a university degree is seen as certification for occupational careers, which institution provides the degree is important. There is a prevalent notion that only certain prestigious universities can bestow credentials for employment in the better positions (cf. Office of Education Refugee Assistance Task Force 1975). Because of the value placed on the presumed superior reputation of a larger institution, some students who could have benefited from smaller classes in other schools may be perplexed when they discover little difference in the marketability of institutions' degrees. One Vietnamese educator remarked that students are reluctant to attend institutions called "colleges" because from the Vietnamese perspective the term "college" denotes a lower status school than does "university." This results in some students preferring the University of Minnesota or Hamline University to Macalester College or community colleges.

In purely financial terms, it must be recognized that attending post-secondary institutions, specifically the University of Minnesota, is an attractive choice for young people. As is detailed later, the financial aid packages for which Indochinese students qualify are substantial. Coming as many do from experiences of low-paying jobs and the need to supplement parents' incomes, students perceive the University as offering the opportunity to advance beyond these menial positions as well as the financial means to maintain themselves for a number of years. During the past academic year, the size of financial aid packages received by Indochinese students became widely known in the community, and informants state that some individuals made their decisions to attend university largely on the prospect of receiving similar amounts. For the majority, however, the availability of financial aid has been a factor in making individuals' hopes of pursuing post-secondary education an actuality which their financial circumstances otherwise would not have allowed.

The University's Response to the Indochinese Students

In the summer of 1975, the University faced a number of administrative and placement issues in preparation for receiving Indochinese students who already were making application for admission. These included determining their residency status for tuition purposes, assessing English abilities and placing students in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, determining eligibility for financial assistance, and counseling students on the selection of majors and courses. While the number of Indochinese students taking courses during the 1975-76 academic year was small, these issues had to be faced, as the expectation was that the number of Indochinese students would undoubtedly increase.

Foreign students on non-immigrant visas pay non-resident tuition rates, which are almost three times resident rates. The decision was made early by the University that Indochinese students would be charged resident rates for tuition after they had lived in the state for one year. This was confirmed by legislative action. How the issue of tuition charges was resolved varied from state to state. While a one-year residency requirement was the dominant pattern among public institutions of higher education in states having large numbers of Indochinese refugees, some states did not grant or were slow in granting resident rates. A few states treated the refugees as foreign students, charging out-of-state rates or international student rates. Some state governments left policy determinations to each institution, resulting in some schools in a state charging resident rates while others charged non-resident rates. Then there are those state schools where refugees paid non-resident tuition but were given special grants to cover the difference between resident and non-resident rates. Some state schools had no policy for the refugees as a group, making residency decisions on a case-by-case basis. The HEW Task Force urged states to grant resident tuition for refugees, since they considered this one of the most important forms of assistance which states could offer to refugees seeking higher education. Because of the benefit afforded refugees by charging the lower resident rates, schools offering such rates have attracted the majority of Indochinese students.

Now that the refugees are eligible to become permanent residents, such variation in tuition rate policies cannot continue. The Indochinese refugee students have never shared the same legal status as foreign students on non-immigrant visas. In a legal sense, it is inaccurate to include the Indochinese with foreign students because of their distinguishing status as "parolees" and soon-to-become permanent residents. As students who come from other countries, the Indochinese are often classed as being "foreign" in the same way as are international students. For purposes of our discussion, use of the category "foreign students" refers only to those students present on non-immigrant visas.

Applicants for admission are required to take an English proficiency examination. The University assumes that facility in English is essential for adequate performance in classes, and the proficiency expected of entering Indochinese students is similar to that expected of foreign students. Most foreign students, however, must send TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores with their applications for admission, and their entry into this country is partly contingent on the University's recognition that their English ability is adequate for taking courses. Indochinese students intent on entering the University also have their English capabilities evaluated. In most cases they are placed in one or more ESL courses designed to bring them to a level which allows them to handle coursework.[8] Students having low scores on the examinations are asked to enter a program composed entirely of ESL courses. Since students taking only ESL courses are not eligible for most forms of financial aid, specifically Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, attempts have been made to move students to the position where they can be taking at least one regular course, usually mathematics, within a program otherwise composed of ESL courses. In this way, they can formally be admitted to the University, be assigned student identification numbers, and make application for financial assistance. When a student can achieve a passing score on the examination, he or she can register for a full program of regular courses, although ESL instructors caution that a passing mark does not mean a student will have no language difficulties in his or her studies. Indochinese students who have graduated from U.S. high schools are not exempt from taking the English proficiency examination or from being required to take one or two ESL courses a quarter during their freshman year.

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[8] According to figures provided by the English as a Second Language Program, the proportion of ESL students who were Indochinese rose from seven percent in Fall 1975 to forty-six percent in Spring 1976, and has only recently dropped to about a third of total enrollment.

While linguists can speak more directly to the grammatical and sound differences between Vietnamese and English, one social aspect of the problems faced by refugees learning English should be noted. While much of the difficulty rests in learners' making themselves understood in English and in understanding what others say, the refugees also come up against differing reactions from Americans when the latter hear English spoken with foreign accents. As one Vietnamese educator has pointed out, English spoken with European accents strikes most Americans as "attractive" and even "sophisticated." English spoken with an accent derived from an individual's Asian native language is not perceived in this way, and in fact is sometimes misinterpreted as reflective of lower intelligence or childishness.

Most Vietnamese students are cognizant of the relationship between their proficiency in English and success in coursework. Among some, however, there is an understandable reluctance to have the length of time needed to obtain a degree extended because of preparatory ESL classes for which they receive no credit toward graduation. Some students would prefer to get started immediately in their major programs, initially taking courses requiring minimal verbal and writing skills, such as mathematics or sciences. In much the same way as many foreign students are able to do well in courses despite inability to fully understand lectures and difficulties in plowing through extensive reading assignments, some Indochinese students believe that determination and hard work will offset their language problems. First-year students who are in their early twenties are uncomfortable about the prospect of finishing their undergraduate degrees as they approach thirty.

Students who already have some years of university behind them are especially eager to obtain the degree as quickly as possible.

Students with previous post-secondary work were able to transfer credit to the University. If the student had an official transcript from a Vietnamese university, credit was awarded in the same manner it is awarded to foreign nationals who have studied in non-American institutions. In the haste of the departure, most individuals gave little thought to carrying evidence of university experience, although a number of people did. Students who did not have transcripts showing previous work were asked to present evidence of attendance in post-secondary institutions, such as a college identification card, examination documents, or certificates of attendance. The student listed courses taken in Vietnam, including descriptions of course content, titles of books, and numbers of hours the courses met. If a course corresponded to one offered at the University, the student was given transfer credit, often in the form of general X999 credit. While general credit is usually acceptable for distribution group requirements, each department has the prerogative of determining whether or not the credits can be applied to completion of program requirements. The Institute of Technology, for example, has asked Indochinese students to take examinations in areas in which they have previous coursework; and if a student passes, the University course number will appear on his or her record in place of the general credit number.

Assigning credit in the absence of records has proven difficult, and undoubtedly inequities exist in credits awarded different students. Although a national center for assisting institutions in evaluating records and claims was established in Long Beach, California, by a $109,000 grant from the Office of Education (Scully 1976), contacting the center meant delays in processing students' admission and placement. Unaware that the final decision on the application of previous work to a University degree may rest with each department, students without records were concerned to obtain as much transfer credit as possible and quickly learned that this often depended on how one's claims were presented. For example, a man who had attended military school was surprised to be told that the University could not accept a particular course, and so tried to assert that he had in fact taken the course at the University of Saigon, which would have made the course acceptable for transfer credit. Some of the initial students applying for transfer credit indicated they had taken a course called "Vietnamese Literature." Since a corresponding course is not given at the University, these students could not be given credit. Subsequent students listed broader courses on Asian literature, which were deemed similar enough to courses offered at the University for credit to be given.

The Indochinese students' lack of documentation for previous university work, insufficient proficiency in English, unfamiliarity with procedures at American universities, and other factors meant that University administrators had to pay special attention to the Indochinese students who required their services. Finding one's way through the administrative procedures of a large university can be confusing for new American students, but for the Indochinese students, as for many foreign students, it is even more so. Preceding and during the 1975-76 academic year, administrators having contact with Indochinese students met periodically to discuss coordination of their services and guidance. During the 1976-77 academic year a Task Group in the College of Liberal Arts reviewed the Indochinese students' situation and made a series of recommendations for improving services. Within budget and personnel limitations, a number of these recommendations have been implemented.

Since the ESL program is designed primarily for international students, Indochinese needing to participate in the program signed up through the International Student Advisor's Office (ISAO). Counselors in ISAO also provided students with advice and assistance in procedural matters and in making decisions regarding their academic undertakings, as did personnel in administrative offices and the various colleges.

As larger numbers of Indochinese students registered for regular courses in addition to ESL classes and as administrators in the various segments of the University became more familiar with students' situations, the International Student Advisor's Offices' role decreased. Since the Indochinese do not share the same legal status as foreign students, it was recognized that ISAO should not include them among their clients. Their status as "parolees" meant that they were neither non-immigrants nor permanent residents. Their inclusion within categories which made them eligible for federal and state programs was the result of federal and state administrative and legislative decisions. For example, Indochinese students are eligible for all forms of federal financial assistance for students, while foreign students are not. For tuition and admissions purposes, Indochinese are considered Minnesota residents, while foreign students are not. Given these differences and the fact that the Indochinese students are likely to stay in this country beyond graduation, treating them as foreign students is quite inappropriate.

Despite the fact that administrative decisions are being made based on Indochinese students' legal statuses as "parolees" or, more recently, future permanent residents, the larger society's social perception of the Indochinese remains incongruent with their legal status. Many Americans still fail to distinguish between Indochinese students and "foreign students." This is a consequence either of unfamiliarity with Indochinese students' legal status or of the ambiguity of the social category of "foreign student." In many people's minds, anyone not born in the United States continues to fall in the category "foreign" regardless of their legal status. For example, students who came from other countries and then became permanent residents or citizens (for example, by marriage to citizens or as relatives of citizens) often are still perceived as "foreign students." The reporting of a recent incident on campus reveals the lack of awareness of the distinctive legal statuses of Indochinese students and individuals on non-immigrant visas. When a Vietnamese student stabbed a student from India after a soccer match in November 1977, the University police and the Minnesota Daily mistakenly described the incident as involving two foreign students (Bednar 1977), with no recognition that in fact the individuals occupied two radically different legal positions.

Students from other countries who have become permanent residents or citizens have done so on an individual basis, and so many Americans may eschew discriminating between which foreign-born students are permanent residents or citizens and which are not in favor of applying the general category "foreign students." The Indochinese, however, have attained permanent residency en masse by legislative action circumventing the criteria applied to others in evaluating petitions for permanent residency. Until this is understood, many Americans are likely to continue lumping the Indochinese with other "aliens" or "foreign students." This in turn may retard the society's institutions in coming to grips with the social implications of the group's presence.

Indochinese as Minority Students

While no single office of the University has taken on administrative responsibility for the Indochinese in the way that ISAO has responsibility for foreign students, administrative and counseling activities have shifted to the Martin Luther King Program (the minority students support program) and the colleges in which Indochinese are enrolled. This has been the case since the 1976-77 academic year when Indochinese enrollment in regular courses showed a substantial increase. Although information is incomplete, a similar shift of responsibility from international students offices to minority students support programs or other offices does not seem to have occurred in most of the other major universities in states having large Indochinese populations. Both our own enquiries[9] and discussions with people at HEW reveal that most universities chose to assign responsibility to international students offices because personnel in those offices seemed most capable of working with students from other cultures. In some instances, personnel in other offices, such as minority students support programs, were considered less knowledgeable about and sensitive to Indochinese students' situations. The small number of Indochinese students at each institution also seems to have indicated to administrators that existing services for foreign students were adequate for the Indochinese. In some states, shifting administrative responsibility to minority students support programs was not possible because of state legislatures' requirements that participants in such programs be U.S. citizens.

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[9] Letters were sent to major state universities in most of the states having Indochinese refugee populations larger than that of Minnesota. We asked which office of the institution had primary administrative responsibility for the Indochinese students. Few responses were received, however, and none of the schools reported having more than 150 Indochinese students (compared with the University of Minnesota's over 200).

Now that the refugees are eligible for permanent residency, it will be even more inappropriate for universities to continue giving responsibility to international students offices. In this regard, the assignment of responsibility to offices other than ISAO puts the University of Minnesota ahead of most other institutions in formulating administrative procedures and providing counseling services appropriate to Indochinese students' legal status.

The University has recognized the Indochinese as minority students. Specifically, they have been included in the category "Asian-American," one of four ethnic categories of minority status. The other three are Black, American Indian, and Hispanic. Included in the category Asian-American are people whose origins are in East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, and the Pacific Islands. The Indochinese refugees therefore join the ranks of an arbitrarily-defined sub-group which includes a variety of nationalities, cultures, religions, and historical experiences. Within the category are both the newly-arrived refugees and second- and third-generation Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos.

According to Admissions and Records, Asian-American students comprised 1.6 percent of total enrollment for Fall 1976 at the Twin Cities campuses (Huang 1977). The four ethnic categories of minority students combined constituted 5.3 percent of enrollment; and therefore Asian-Americans made up 29 percent of minority enrollment, second only to Blacks who constituted 44 percent.

Information distributed by the Martin Luther King Program states that the program is designed

> to provide a broad array of supportive services to handle unique needs of students who are economically or educationally disadvantaged and who are interested in pursuing educational opportunities at the University of Minnesota in a traditional and non-traditional manner (Minority Concerns Publications Sub-committee 1977:146).

Students certified for participation in the program are provided special counseling and are eligible for financial assistance from a reserved fund, which is discussed in the following section on financial aid. MLK counselors certify students for participation when a student is found to meet two out of three criteria. The first criteria is inclusion in one of the four ethnic categories; the second is economic disadvantage; and the third is educational disadvantage.[10] The Indochinese generally qualify on the basis of all three criteria. Even if a student comes from a family which was able to bring much of their wealth with them to the U.S., he or she could qualify for the program. "Educational disadvantage" has generally been interpreted as being their English language deficiency and not the low quality of their previous education. In fact, the quality of the education system in Vietnam and students' academic achievements in that system often compare favorably with that of the general population of American students.

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[10] Certification for the program is, therefore, not restricted to students from the four ethnic categories, as a sizable number of Whites have also been certified on the basis of economic and educational disadvantage.

Ostensibly, students can receive certification for the program and counseling from any of the personnel on the MLK staff. In fact, a student is referred to counselors representing the same ethnic category as the student. Until recently, the number of Asian-American students certified for the program has been small. This is the result of the fact that Asian-American students generally do not qualify on the basis of economic or educational disadvantage. This does not mean that Asian-Americans have completely assimilated with the dominant American culture or face no racial prejudice. Psychologist Stanley Sue points out, however, that in the United States

> Chinese and Japanese median family incomes in 1970 were far superior to the national median income level. Even Filipinos have an income similar to the national average. The incidence of poverty for Asian-Americans is the same as, or lower than, the rest of the nation. These three Asian-American groups also show higher average educational attainment than the rest of the country (1977:381-382).

It is also fair to say that many Asian-Americans do not view their social situation as commensurate with that of other minority groups, perhaps viewing themselves as members of a "successful" minority group, at least in economic and educational terms. Because of this, individuals may have consciously avoided participation in programs which they view, rightly or wrongly, as primarily designed for the "unsuccessful."

With the arrival of the Indochinese students, the number of Asian-American students certified for the Martin Luther King Program has increased six-fold in two years. Within this short period of time, the Asian-American contingent has moved from being the ethnic category with the smallest number of participants to being the second largest ethnic category.

To say the least, the Indochinese have not been welcomed with open arms by participants from other ethnic categories. From the point of view of these groups, the Indochinese have not experienced the racial discrimination and social neglect in U.S. society as have Blacks, American Indians, and Chicanos. The idiomatic phrase "they haven't paid their dues" perhaps captures best this sentiment. During the late sixties, minority students pressed university administrators to establish programs which would serve the needs of minority students and recognize the social and educational restraints which the dominant culture had placed on their advancement. Minority student enrollments have increased in recent years, but along with the increase in numbers have come doubts about higher education's commitment to attracting and retaining minority students (cf. Spurlock 1977, Albright 1974).

The inclusion of non-indigenous newcomers in a program designed to contribute to the redress of specific social and historical circumstances experienced by groups of longer standing in this country is seen as diluting the purpose of the program. Without denying that many Indochinese students face real economic and educational problems as a consequence of sudden departure from their homeland and arrival in an alien culture, serious questions have been raised about the appropriateness of trying to meet these needs through programs whose definition and prescriptions are responses to a specific set of long-term social ills.

In his discussion of what would be a model minority students support program, Michael T. Fagin, Director of the Minority Group Studies Center at Mankato State College, writes the following:

> Minority groups in America have suffered economic exploitation, political oppression, social degradation, and poor or limited educational opportunities; therefore, certain assumptions can be made about the "culturally different." These students attending predominantly white institutions may have unique needs, problems, and concerns resulting from years of social and educational oppression... When listing some of the characteristics of the culturally different, we must take care that interpretations of these generalized statements do not become stereotypes of minorities. The following are some basic assumptions about the characteristics of the culturally different: (a) socially isolated from their culture, (b) in unfamiliar surroundings and environment, (c) educationally less advantaged, (d) frequently economically disadvantaged, (e) often unaware of educational opportunities, (f) have a history of continued failure and negative reinforcement, (g) low self-esteem, (h) feel alienated and discouraged, (i) frequently confused about values of dominant and different cultures, (j) resistant to and poor performers on standardized assessment tests, and (k) unaware of own heritage and culture (1976:54-55).

That the Indochinese as a group reflect many, though not all, of these characteristics is undisputed. That they do so for reasons distinct from those of other groups is equally apparent. The educational and economic disadvantages of the refugees are viewed by some members of other minority groups as consequences of individual decisions to flee a society in which they had faced no disadvantage, and in which many in fact may have enjoyed advantages over their fellow countrymen as a result of their occupational and social statuses. Their disadvantages in a new culture are considered to be of a different order than those faced by indigenous groups, and there is some resentment that federal government and University officials appear willing to see an existing program's purpose blunted through absorption of such a group.

As "parolees" the refugees were eligible for practically all federal and state programs and services, and therefore it would have been difficult to argue that they should have been precluded from participation in a minority students support program, even though inclusion of refugees was not foreseen by those who had urged establishment of such programs. Given existing criteria for participation in minority students support programs, legal exclusion of Indochinese students is probably not possible.

The belief has been expressed by some University and federal government personnel that the number of Indochinese who reflect the above-cited characteristics will decrease fairly rapidly during the next few years. According to this scenario, the income of Indochinese families will approach the median income level for the U.S. population; those young people who have passed through elementary and secondary schools will have done well and no longer have language difficulties; and the Indochinese will have become more comfortable and self-confident in their participation in U.S. society. As a result, many future Indochinese students are seen as no longer qualifying for certification in the Martin Luther King Program, and perhaps as no longer desiring the formal designation of minority student status. This view of the future may be based on the assumption that the Indochinese will be similarly "successful" in their adaptation to U.S. society as are others of Asian descent presumed to have been. At the very least, such an assumption is untested and is predicated on a stereotypic view of Asians which fails to take into account the great diversity of cultures and historical experiences in that part of the world. Underlying this view is an assumption of uniformity in the way Indochinese will adapt to this society. Evidence from the past two years could be cited to support a variety of predictions about the Indochinese refugees' future. As indicated earlier, a sizable proportion have successfully begun the re-establishment of financial and social positions commensurate with those held in Vietnam, while another segment has not done so.

It remains to be seen what the Indochinese themselves do with the classification as minority students in which the institution and the federal government have encapsulated them. Vietnamese and American informants have found students presently ignorant about the social and historical bases of minority students support programs. Some informants have even indicated that a number of students initially believed the MLK program and special financial assistance were for foreign students or were established specifically for them. For most of the students, program certification represents access to financial resources, and few have given serious thought to the meaning of minority student status or to the relationship they have to other minority students. As time passes, however, it is not unlikely that they will recognize that it is their ethnic status, as well as the larger society's continued perception of them as "refugees," which affords them access to certain resources. As indicated in Part I, the sharing of the category "refugee" has been used by some to argue that individuals are entitled to certain resources and to amounts similar to those received by others within the category. However well-motivated, the federal programs and special attention given the refugees by non-governmental groups have contributed to some individuals' belief that resources are being made available because they have been classified in a certain way by the larger society. Because the Indochinese are not familiar with the American socio-economic system, their experience provides little evidence for doubting that the whole country operates on this basis.

It is obvious that formal educational activities and institutions are being used as fundamental social instruments in the process of assimilation of this new group into American society. Yet for many, especially those utilizing higher education, access to this resource has been most easily obtainable through emphasis and identification with the negative aspects of their situation. The distinct possibility exists in this present situation that in the University's desire to assist this group it may inadvertently contribute to a shift in self-identification emphasizing those negative attributes cited earlier by Fagin. It is clear that for them to adopt such a perspective would be to take on a radically different set of assumptions about themselves than they held prior to migration.

Ethnicity is not the same as culture although it may take cultural differences into account. Ethnicity is a perspective which may originate from within either the wider society or the people themselves. Often, this perceived self-identification as a separate people with special characteristics is forced upon the specific category of people by the views of the dominant society.

Vincent (1970) has pointed out that ethnicity provides an organizational vessel which "becomes politically relevant when differentiated access to positions of advantage become institutionalized in ethnic terms." The American Indian population is recognized by most Americans to be widely diverse in both physical and cultural types. There are vast differences between the Hopi, the Navajo, and the Zuni, all who reside in close proximity in the Southwest. Yet it is apparent that when they act in concert as "Native Americans" in such groups as AIM or other pan-Indian ethnic groups they have begun to exercise considerably more political clout. Because the category American Indian resonates in the larger American society, it has together with certain social processes resulted in the emergence of a newfound pan-Indian identity of which the Indians themselves were previously seldom aware.

Certainly Japanese do not recognize a shared cultural system with Southeast Asians. This latter grouping in turn is aware of distinct differences among themselves as separate entitites of Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians, and others. Yet at the present time all are classified as Asian "ethnics" by the dominant society. The outlines have begun to appear of the emergence of an Asian-American self-identification which at present seemingly does not exist among the newly arrived Indochinese (a term which itself is the label of outsiders). But more important is the potential development of a newly emergent ethnic identity which includes attributes of self-conscious perception of being Asian, refugee, and minority. The irony of such a twist of fate is that this imposed re-definition of self-identity is being carried out within a context of a commitment on the part of the dominant society to a value of respecting ethnic and cultural identity.

The refugees have demonstrated that they are conscious of status distinctions among themselves. Despite their new circumstances, it is unlikely that people, especially those who were among the elite in their homelands, will alter greatly their sense of who they are. For the moment, their financial situations and the immediate concerns of adjustment overshadow assessment of the meaning of the ascribed ethnic and minority statuses. As individuals become more aware of the sociological dimensions of the dominant society's actions, however, resentment may be expressed if the classifications are interpreted as denying the cultural heritage of a people or as implying certain social characteristics which are incongruent with individuals' backgrounds or capabilities.

Financial Aid

The Congressional funding for refugees passed in 1975 was intended to assist in the process of their resettlement in the United States. However, it is clear that, on the federal level at least, academic higher education has not been considered a primary part of this resettlement program. Special grants from these funds have been made to some institutions for the instruction of English and vocational training but not for direct support of either academic instruction or the aid of individuals enrolled in colleges or universities. A proposal to make higher education funds available was submitted in Congress but later withdrawn for lack of support (Chronicle of Higher Education 1975).

The question then is: How are those refugees who have incorporated higher education in their strategies for adaptation financing attendance at the University? In discussing the financial assistance which has been utilized by Indochinese students, we focus on four aspects: 1) the amounts of financial assistance granted, 2) the relationship of refugees' situations to eligibility requirements for financial aid, 3) the negligible impact of assistance to Indochinese students on the availability of support for other minority students, and 4) the dissonance between the basis for obtaining financial assistance and the expectation of self-sufficiency.

The University of Minnesota, as well as the federal government, has from the beginning made administrative decisions which aided the refugee student financially. In the summer of 1975 it was ruled that the federally-supported Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG) and Guaranteed Student Loans (GSL) would be available to refugee students who met these programs' requirements of need. These funds, however, come from those earmarked for all students and are not part of the monies granted as refugee aid. In 1957 Hungarian refugee students were assisted by the University through free tuition scholarships, but Indochinese refugees were not given aid in this form. As noted, in 1975 in keeping with the spirit of decisions made about federally-financed student aid programs, the University offered the Indochinese tuition rates as state residents. This same interpretation was later extended to include all state-supported schools by the Minnesota Legislature. However, as individuals change to permanent resident status under the Congressional legislation of October 1977, they will qualify as residents in every state in which they reside, and the basis of this tuition distinction will disappear.

It is only through official registration as a student that an individual qualifies for various kinds of federal, state, and institutional aid administered by the Student Financial Aid Office. Registration requires an institution's prior formal acceptance (admission) of the individual as a student. As do most schools, the University of Minnesota requirements for admission include restrictive criteria based upon past performance at a secondary school or other post-secondary schools. In the case of the non-native English speaker, the ability to use functional English academically must be demonstrated. Many of the several hundred refugees who have participated in the University's English as a Second Language Program did so prior to their admission as students to the University. Thus, technically they were not registered students and consequently did not qualify for University financial aid programs. In a few cases, especially in the early days, admissions officials admitted refugee students in order that they could qualify for such aid despite the fact that they were attending only ESL classes. Prompted by a sense of urgency during the first two years, this leniency seems no longer to be the case. Presently 29 of the 56 Vietnamese enrolled in the ESL Program have yét to be admitted to the University and thus receive no institutional aid. Some may, however, qualify for assistance under funding for training available from other state agencies.

When we look at funds administered by the Student Financial Aid Office, records indicate that 86 percent of the refugee students attending the University are receiving some form of financial aid. Less than half of the total undergraduate population participate in these financial aid programs.[11] More importantly, 71 percent of the Indochinese are included in MLK, the minority students support program.

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[11] If undergraduate and graduate students are combined, only 30 percent of the total student population receive aid administered by the Student Financial Aid Office. Many of the resources available to graduate students, such as teaching assistantships, are not administered by this office. Only twelve of the 203 Indochinese students are graduate students.

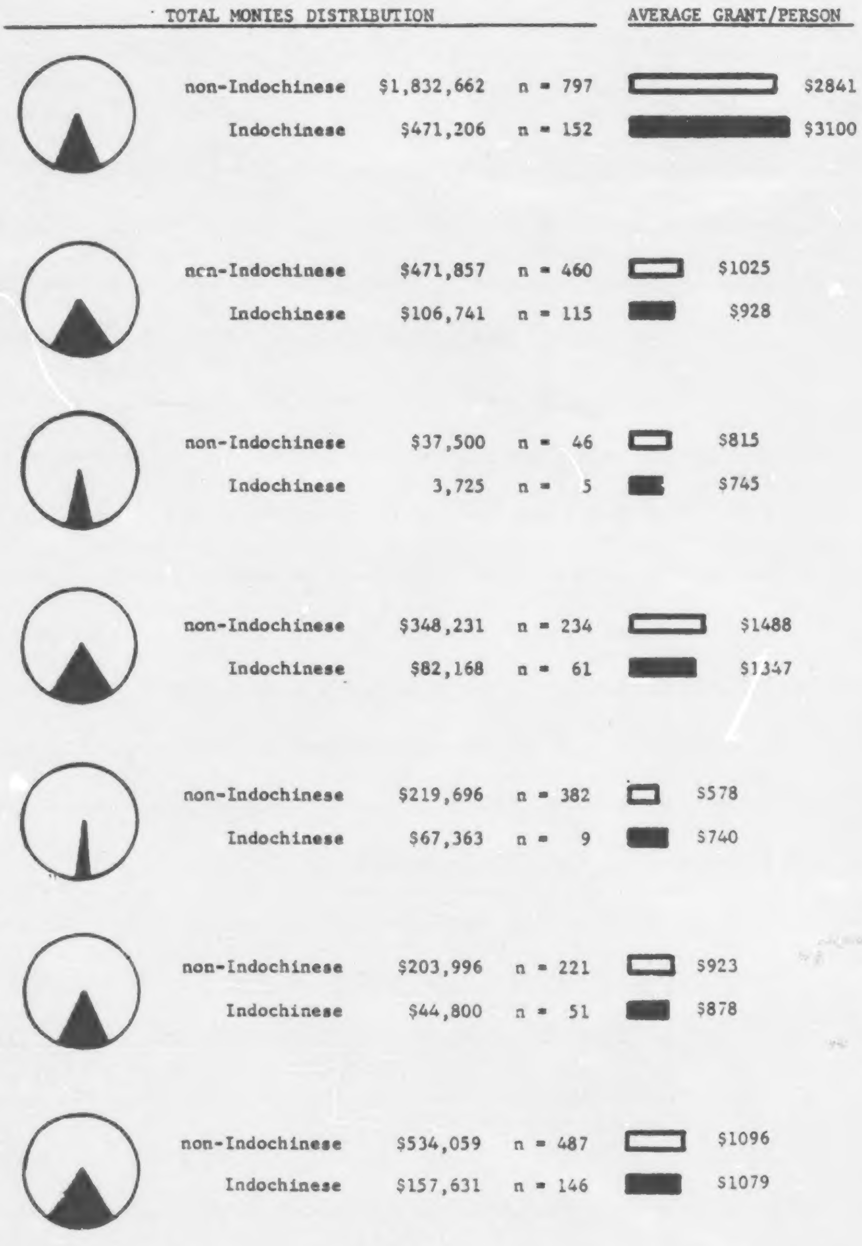
The University's decision to consider Indochinese students as minority rather than foreign or majority students had the consequence of allowing them to qualify for special consideration in the allotment of University-administered student aid funds. As MLK participants, for instance, they are usually not expected to generate through self-employment or loans as much of their costs (need) as a typical student. For this category more direct aid to cover costs is available in the form of either University-funded grants or from federally-funded Supplementary Educational Opportunity Grants.

It was not possible to obtain summary statistical information on all student aid at the time of this research. However, an analysis of grants which had been made to all MLK applicant students as of September 1 is useful in seeing how our focal group fared. (Note that this data concerns awards made one month prior to the beginning of the Fall term. Receipt of the award is dependent upon actual registration and attendance. Probably not more than 70 percent of those cases included in this analysis actually attended. However, it was felt by the Student Financial Aid Office that it fairly accurately reflects the final distribution pattern to those receiving financial aid under the MLK Program.) Those Indochinese who are not certified for MLK but are receiving aid are not included in this data.

Table IV is a breakdown of resources committed at that time. For the 1977-78 academic year, over four hundred seventy thousand dollars were available to Indochinese applicants. The average aid package totaled $3,100 for Indochinese students, although the range varied from over $5,100

Table IV

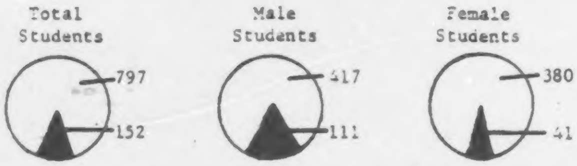
Grant Distribution for Certified MLK Students
September 1, 1977



		TOTAL MONIES DISTRIBUTION		AVERAGE GRANT/PERSON
TOTAL GRANTS	non-Indochinese	$1,832,662	n = 797	$2841
	Indochinese	$471,206	n = 152	$3100
MLK (University Funds)	non-Indochinese	$471,857	n = 460	$1025
	Indochinese	$106,741	n = 115	$928
State of MINN. GRANTS	non-Indochinese	$37,500	n = 46	$815
	Indochinese	3,725	n = 5	$745
WORK STUDY	non-Indochinese	$348,231	n = 234	$1488
	Indochinese	$82,168	n = 61	$1347
NDSI (Loans)	non-Indochinese	$219,696	n = 382	$578
	Indochinese	$67,363	n = 9	$740
SEOG (Federal Funds)	non-Indochinese	$203,996	n = 221	$923
	Indochinese	$44,800	n = 51	$878
BEOG (Federal Funds)	non-Indochinese	$534,059	n = 487	$1096
	Indochinese	$157,631	n = 146	$1079

▲ Represents number of Indochinese students

DISTRIBUTION BY SEX



to a married student with several dependent children to one of only several hundred dollars. It must be kept in mind, however, that financial aid amounts do not always represent outright cash grants. Rather, the award makes available access to a combination of grants, loans, and work study programs totaling the amount.

While a variety of resources are available (we have identified six general categories), no single individual draws funds from all of them. Typically, the package arranged by financial aid officers is built around the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant, and then one or two other sources are drawn upon to make up the pre-determined need amount. Indochinese students generally received packages composed of more separate categories of aid than did other MLK students. This is reflected in Table IV which shows that while average grants from specific funds were lower for the Indochinese, their total packages were greater. Few Indochinese students qualified for the State of Minnesota Grants and Scholarships because of the early filing date as well as the general restrictions applicable at the time these awards were made. It is known that more individuals qualified for this program in awards made subsequent to this analysis. However, this fact would not change the size of the total grants given any one person. Rather, it would merely shift the source of the funds granted.

In general, MLK students are felt to face unusual difficulties in competing academically, especially in the first year at the University. Therefore, they are not held to the general norm used in assigning of financial aid packages which typically assumes self-employment during the school year. Even so, 40 percent of the refugee students are on

Work Study programs while only 29 percent of the non-Indochinese are. At the same time, while the average loan to refugee students was higher, only 6 percent were given such an award as compared to nearly half (48 percent) of the remainder of MLK students.

Financial aid packages are drawn up after first determining an individual's assumed need. This is arrived at through a formula which considers costs and parental and individual resources available to cover these costs. For academic year 1977-78, the amount of $2610 was set as the cost of a single student dependent on his or her parents living at home. An older and/or legally independent student, as are a major proportion of refugee students, generally is assumed to have greater need, $3600. Thus, students who are considered dependents of their parents generally receive less aid than those who are self-sufficient. For purposes of awarding financial aid, self-sufficiency is determined by the relative absence of parental financial support and a child's separate residence. More than 50 percent of the refugee students have stated on financial aid applications that they are self-sufficient. This figure reflects the large number of students who are here without parents. But it also includes one-quarter of those who have one or both parents in this country. This is in contrast to the fact that less than one-quarter of the total undergraduate population in the U.S. qualify as self-sufficient, according to a national survey (Van Dusen 1975). Seventy-five percent of the refugee students claiming self-sufficiency reported personal incomes for 1976 averaging $2950. Given this low figure, the sources of the remainder of their financial maintenance during this period can only be surmised; apparently some combination of support from relatives, friends, sponsors, federal cash assistance, and undoubtedly parents.

For those individuals who are part of family units present in the U.S., the average reported family income for 1976 was only $7377. It should be noted that 1976 was the first full year of residence in the United States, and so was an unstable period in terms of occupation and incomes. Unlike most students' families, refugee families, except in a few cases, have not accumulated assets nor demonstrated long-term earning power. Because there is an expectation that certain proportions of parents' and students' resources be applied to financing an individual's university education, the lack or low level of such resources among the refugees is converted by the formula used for all applicants to signify greater financial need, disregarding the fact that the minimal resources are primarily a consequence of their recent arrival. In many cases, family incomes were sufficiently low so that the assumption could be made that parents could not contribute to children's maintenance. In some low income situations, the fact that a student was living at home was not interpreted as signifying less financial need, as it was apparent that she or he would probably be assisting the family financially rather than being assisted by it. Many of the refugee students, then, qualified for the maximum amounts of aid that could be granted. This situation in part accounts for the relatively high awards given to all minority students, especially the refugee students.

An often repeated criticism on the part of minority students is that the inclusion of refugee students in the MLK Program detracts from the availability of funds earmarked for them. In reality, no MLK student demonstrating need has failed to receive these funds because they were exhausted. Financial Aid officials point out that any unspent funds would be transferred to a pool available to all students. Even if the Indochinese had not qualified as MLK participants, they would, on the basis of their demonstrated need, still probably have been given awards in the same amounts from University-contributed funds.

Not unexpectedly, refugee students often compare among themselves financial aid package amounts. Some find it difficult to understand the basis of determining assumed need upon which the financial aid is granted. They argue from a position of equal entitlement based upon a common status of being a refugee or being a student. The latter is a perspective stemming from the more elitist higher education system in Vietnam, where attendance was essentially tuition-free. These approaches have led to allegations (by some of the students themselves) of purposive inaccurate reporting on the application form. According to informants, as individuals have come to understand the basis on which need is determined, statements about incomes and self-sufficiency have been adjusted in order to obtain what they believe to be rightfully theirs. For example, one student justified revealing fewer resources than he had by expressing the view that if the U.S. government expects him to make a contribution to the society in the future, rather than being on welfare, the government must provide him the financial means for obtaining a degree.

As a consequence of their perspectives and unfamiliarity with the basis for distributing financial assistance, Indochinese students are confused by the conflicting signals being given about the necessity of becoming financially self-sufficient. The federal government and sponsors have encouraged the refugees to make their own way through employment, and yet those who have tried to do so seem to be penalized when applying for financial assistance for higher education. Rather than being given credit for demonstrating their concordance with the ethic of self-sufficiency, the amounts of their aid packages were reduced because of their personal incomes. For example, those Indochinese applicants who are not dependent on parental support and who earned more than $3000 in 1976 (generally in menial labor positions) received financial aid packages averaging $1200 less than those who similarly claimed independence but had no personal income through employment. While other factors influence the amounts granted, such differences have led some students to question the emphasis placed on attaining self-sufficiency.

During the Congressional deliberations about extending legislation which provides reimbursement to states for cash assistance to the refugees, some students and potential students were concerned that termination of cash assistance would prevent their attendance at the University. Since categorical eligibility requirements for public assistance are waived for the refugees, some students or students' families have supplemented financial aid for education with cash assistance. The loss of cash assistance might have persuaded them that going to the University would require an unacceptable outlay from their moderate incomes, despite substantial financial aid packages.

While we have no data for comparison of the University's grants with those made at other institutions, there is reason to believe that the University of Minnesota has made more aid resources available than most. This plus the academic stature of the school largely explains the relatively high rate of attendance here. That knowledge of this fact has circulated among the refugee population nationally was demonstrated by the number and circumstances of inquiries received during the summer of 1977 by the Admissions Office from potential students residing out of state.

Since the late 1960's, federal and state financial aid programs for post-secondary education have increased. Arriving when they have, the refugees have been beneficiaries of current assumptions about individuals' rights of access to post-secondary education and governments' obligations to provide financial support. That the refugees come from cultures in which higher education is valued and that they are largely from middle class backgrounds have resulted in many choosing to attend the University, and thereby being in a position to make use of available funds. Any tabulation of the costs of resettlement must include these amounts.

Conclusion

In bringing to an end our discussion of Indochinese refugees and higher education, we can present some general recommendations and points for consideration. These have emerged from our description of the patterns of adaptation of the Indochinese community in Minnesota, as well as from what has been revealed about those individuals who have incorporated attendance at the University in their strategies for attaining desired social and occupational statuses.

The Indochinese community, while predominantly Vietnamese, has been shown to be socially heterogeneous in composition. For example, while the majority are from middle or upper class urban backgrounds, a sizable number come from rural areas and lower socio-economic strata. Patterns of adaptation reflect similar diversity. On the one hand, individuals have moved rapidly to re-establish self-sufficiency through occupational re-training and/or employment. Some continue to have difficulty in doing this however. On the other hand, a substantial segment of the refugee community has relied heavily on public and private financial assistance.

Many of the policies and supporting assumptions of those we have identified as "patrons" and "brokers" for the refugees have encouraged assimilation into the dominant society in an effort to promote self-sufficiency. Predictably, certain tensions and misunderstandings arose during the resettlement process, largely because of divergent assumptions by "patrons/brokers" and the refugees about what actions and strategies were appropriate in adapting to the new environment. For instance, sponsors and other "patrons/brokers" initially did not appreciate the consequences of the refugees' concerns about status distinctions among themselves and about regaining the outward signs of previous statuses.

The refugees themselves have employed a variety of strategies in exploring how best to adapt to their new circumstances. Besides making extensive use of private and public assistance efforts, refugees have migrated from rural to urban areas in the U.S. and from the state of their initial placement with a sponsor to states considered more favorable.

Attending institutions of post-secondary education is certainly a major component of many individuals' strategies either for regaining previous statuses or for attaining occupational positions heretofore considered beyond their grasp. As it does for all students, the University has made certain demands on Indochinese students, most specifically in terms of their English language ability. But the University has also provided support services and has eased the financial burden of pursuing a degree.

From these and other data, we have identified four issues which are pertinent to the University's response to Indochinese students. To a greater or lesser degree, these four issues are presented in the form of recommendations. More specifically, they are presented as points of departure for reflecting on the presence of Indochinese students at the University.

First, care must be taken not to assume a homogeneity among the Indochinese. Not only do they have different national, cultural and religious heritages, but they also come from different social strata. Further distinctions have been made according to their social situations in this country, notably whether they are here with or without members of their family. For some students, coming to the University is the culmination of an educational process already decided upon while in their homelands. For others, coming to the University is something they would not have considered or been permitted to do in their homelands.

The caution against treating the Indochinese as a homogeneous group also leads to a consideration of the meaning of the category

"Asian-American." The arrival of 150,000 Indochinese is likely to make the larger society more aware of citizens of Asian ancestry. There are serious questions, however, about the appropriateness of pulling together under one label individuals from different nations in Asia. Given the fact that Vietnamese feel little cultural affinity with Cambodians, is it realistic to assume that they feel affinity toward Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, or Filipinos? In terms of shared experience in the United States, are there substantive similarities between second- and third-generation Chinese or Japanese and the refugees? People who find it useful to employ the term "Asian-Americans" will need to be convincing in establishing what are the common characteristics and shared experiences which make the category sociologically useful. It can be expected, however, that the sudden influx of a large number of Asians will rekindle a belief among some people that the category "Asian-Americans" may be politically useful.

Second, strong reasons do not present themselves for establishing special educational programs or academic counselors for the Indochinese. Existing programs and counselors, such as the ESL program, freshman English for foreign students, and counseling in the various colleges do not need to be supplemented by special programs. Had the national resettlement program unfolded according to some prescient and well-prepared plan, the importance of higher education to many refugees would have been recognized and special programs would have been appropriate during the first few years. As it turned out, higher education in effect was not asked to participate in the resettlement process in any special way. In retrospect, the University's ad hoc approach to the

Indochinese was both sufficient and realistic in terms of available institutional resources and clients' needs. Evidence suggests that Indochinese students would not have utilized special academic counselors nor be performing any differently had they been segregated into all-Indochinese classes. The experience of the past two years indicates that the *ad hoc* approach was probably successful in dealing with concerns identified by the Indochinese themselves. Providing special academic programs or services may only have served to reinforce their self-identification as "refugee" or "minority."

As is true for any identified segment of the student population, greater awareness among instructors and counselors of the motivations and needs of Indochinese students can increase the effectiveness of instruction and services. Indochinese students have already developed a network among themselves of individuals who can provide assistance and support. Similarly, the past two years have given a certain segment of students time to develop an understanding of who among University personnel are available for advice and assistance, and this information is being passed to newcomers. The University might explore ways of articulating directly with and supporting these communication networks, one formal manifestation of which is the Vietnamese Students Association. These networks also exist in a variety of other forms, including groupings based on kinship, common residence, and friendship.

That some Indochinese will have difficulty in their coursework and in making maximum use of their years at the University is certainly true. Identifying and helping these students requires the same kind of patience and understanding which the institution expects from its instructors and counselors in dealing with all students, whether of this culture or of others.

Third, serious thought should be given to the University's educational role in contributing to the definition of how the Indochinese should proceed in their adaptation to U.S society. In providing services to Indochinese students, to what extent should the University treat them as a special category of students? Does the variation which exists among the Indochinese in terms of motivations for attending the University and educational backgrounds caution against viewing them as a category of students? To what extent does the institution depersonalize its students by including them, often against their volition, in categories? Has the institution contributed to this new group's perception that access to resources and opportunities is enhanced by identifying themselves as members of an implicitly exclusionary category defined for them by the larger society? To what degree is the University contributing to a permanent self-perception of being dependent on the larger society for meeting economic and social needs?

During recent years, higher education has been especially aware of the cultural pluralism among student populations. While the federal government has devised policies and funded programs which encourage assimilation of the Indochinese refugees, many universities and colleges have tried to be responsive to the cultural integrity of this new segment of students. For administrative purposes, however, the Indochinese have been categorized as "minority students," a category spawned from antecedent categories of "Indochinese" and "refugee." This has been done in an effort to assist these students, and such a recognition (or imposition) of a group identity based on ethnicity follows patterns established with regard to other groups. While such categories may be convenient for the society's institutions and may be employed in Indochinese students' strategies either now or in the future, it should not be forgotten that the categories are at most semantic devices which have unequal social meaning in different contexts. The categories into which individuals have been placed also may convey information which does not apply to each and every person. Recognizing that ethnic and other categories are unavoidable in a pluralistic society, educator Colin Greer is also aware of the possibility of neglect through the use of social categories, as evidenced by his admonition that the society be "sensitive to the individual within the category" (1970:56). That the Indochinese do not now reflect, nor are likely to in the future, a uniform set of social characteristics suggests that such sensitivity in working with students is both necessary and potentially effective.

Fourth, the sudden arrival of this new group of students and the University's need to respond to them may be institutionally useful because they draw attention to certain practices and assumptions which otherwise tend to go unnoticed. In assessing how Indochinese students are operating at the University, it may be salutary to temper negative impressions with an understanding of the extent to which their actions reveal possible truths about the institution or other students. For example, some University personnel have expressed dismay at the refugee students' emphasis on the certification aspect of gaining a college degree. There has also been concern that some Indochinese students see admission to the University as one of several alternatives for gaining access to publicly-supported financial assistance. Neither of these actions is unique to refugee students, but this group's visibility tends to accentuate the contrast between their perspectives and other idealized values regarding the rationale for attendance at the University. Successful impression management often depends on an ability to play upon the values and assumptions of the institution or individual with whom a person is interacting. Since the Indochinese students are unable to couch their actions in terms of the values and assumptions of American culture, the motivations for their actions, while often similar to those of many American students, sometimes appear more transparent. As a further example, the assumption of many Indochinese students that they are entitled to sizable financial aid amounts is certainly not without correspondence among many American students. It is unlikely that the Indochinese are the only participants in the minority students support program who view the program's services primarily in terms of certification for special financial assistance. Recognition of such parallels not only puts Indochinese students' actions in context, but also may illuminate some realities which the institution and other students often prefer to discount.

Given the suddenness of Indochinese students' presence on campus and the institution's lack of recent experience with refugee students, the University had little choice but to adopt an *ad hoc* approach in responding to these students. However, it has been pointed out that the arrival of refugees is an endemic part of American social history, especially during the post-World War II period. People in refugee status from other countries, notably Uganda, Ethiopia, and the Soviet Union, are presently arriving. They are recognized as refugees because certain situations in their homelands prompted their departure. Largely as a consequence of dissatisfaction with the use of "parolee" status provisions to grant admission to large groups, some national legislators are proposing that the definition of who should be considered a refugee be clarified. Proposals are being drafted for establishment of a more precise immigration category for refugees, with yearly quotas of perhaps as many as 15,000. If what we know about the social backgrounds and aspirations of the Indochinese and other recent refugee groups is predictive of future groups' use of higher education, it may be wise for the University to reflect on its experience with the Indochinese in order to develop policies for accommodating new groups. Federal government involvement and feelings of shared national responsibility may not accompany the arrival of future groups, and so it is incumbent upon the University now to establish policies in a dispassionate manner if these students are to be effectively served.

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